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## Working a Dream: The History, Development, and Coordination of "Will Act for Change"

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# Working A Dream

The history, development, and coordination of  
“Will Act for Change:”

Performance education through  
The Lifestyle Advisor Program  
at Prevention and Wellness Services,  
Western Washington University

By: Daisye Germaine Orr

March 2000



**WESTERN**  
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*An equal opportunity university*

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## ***HONORS THESIS***

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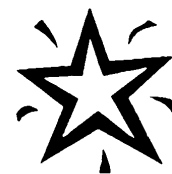
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This project is the result of an incredible experience in my life, the development and coordination of “Will Act for Change.” Someone once asked me what my dream job would be and I replied, “I’m doing it.” I therefore dedicate this work to those who made my dream all that it was. Thank you.

*Dr. Patricia Fabiano*

The members of “Will Act for Change” from 1997-2000:

*Bethany, Katie, Michal, Monica, Shannon,  
Angela, David, Ellen, John, Kennedy, Melissa, Rahel, Sabine, Sarah, Slavka,  
Brett, Bryan, Jane, Jen, Katinka, Megan, Raquel*

The staff of Prevention and Wellness Services:

*Catharine, Chris, Doris, Elva, Ellen, Kris, Maggie, Nicole, Shirley, Yoshiko*

*Jim Lortz*

*Dr. Evelyn Ames*

And to the upcoming members of “Will Act for Change”...  
this is only one of your tools, the rest is within you.

## Mission

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Prevention and Wellness Services of Western Washington University houses the Performance Education troupe, “Will Act for Change,” under its’ peer health education program, The Lifestyle Advisor Program. The mission of Prevention and Wellness Services is to improve the health of students in the broadest sense—to reduce individual risk for illness and injury and to work toward the presence of well-being, dignity, and justice which may lead to the genuine health of the whole community.

“Will Act for Change” seeks to utilize this mission statement by using theatre to educate students about health and social issues. “Will Act for Change” uses the true stories of Western students to create interactive learning environments involving students in solving dilemmas relating to physical, emotional, and social health. Audience interaction, discussion, and facilitation are crucial aspects of this health education program.

In performances, “Will Act for Change” encourages individuals to make choices for themselves that incorporate positive, inclusive, and empowering change to maintain healthy behaviors and attitudes. The performances focus on the risk reduction model of prevention which does not ask individuals to abstain from engaging in certain behaviors or holding certain attitudes, but rather supports the examination of behaviors or attitudes that may cause harm to an individual or community.



Over the years, I have developed a personal philosophy around educational theatre, or what I call performance education. What follows are the different parts of my philosophy along with an explanation detailing the context and application of each piece.

**Performance education uses the true stories of individuals.**

The playwright David Mamet once said, “Always tell the truth, it is the easiest thing to remember.” Part of performance education for me is teaching people their stories are interesting and worth telling. I think there is a myth in society that all of the worthwhile experiences happen to other people. Whereas I have found that we all have stories to tell, and there is authenticity and sincerity with the audience when a performer talks about her own life.

**Performance education works best as an education effort within a community, by members of that community—no matter how large or small the community is.**

When “Will Act for Change” performed in The Juvenile Detention Center in 2000, I told them I felt it was a good experience, however it contradicted my personal philosophy. I believe that each community has their own experiences and their own culture. If an “outsider” comes in and tries to educate as if they know what goes on in that community, the presentation loses credibility because it is unbelievable. My ideal situation with The Juvenile Detention Center would be to work with some of the youth to perform for other Juvenile Detention Centers (or their own), or take their performance outside and educate the community on their experience as adjudicated youth.



**The difference between an actor and a performance educator lies in the educator's knowledge of the content they are theatrically presenting.**

Performance educators have a responsibility to know what they are talking about. That is one of the reasons I ask them to use their own stories because then the application is more understandable. Performance educators must be prepared to discuss health and social issues with their audiences, both right after the performance and if they are stopped on the street. What often happens in performance education is that the students in the group become recognized as a knowledge base for what they perform about and are often asked questions in spaces outside of the performance.

**Performance education includes theatre, discussion, and audience interaction.**

Performance education is not only a theatrical performance. Ingrained within the performance is the audience itself, either through discussion or direct interaction. "Will Act for Change" was created as a hands-on educational tool and not a dramatic lecture.

**Performance education is as therapeutic for the group itself as it is for the audience.**

The topic of performance education is processing. Because the students in the group become personally involved in the topics, emotions are expected to run high. However, even though performance education is therapeutic and healing, it is not therapy and there is a task at hand. Students may need that clarification voiced aloud. The group is a support system for each other, but sometimes there are issues that need to be processed elsewhere.

## Rationale

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For those working in education, the need for innovative and effective ways of connecting with individuals is always present. Health education, in particular, is an area where dissemination of information is often not enough. Using theatre as an outreach and educational tool in health education is a proactive means to reach individuals who do not respond to lectures, brochures, or programs. According to Boal, “Theatre is a form of knowledge; it should and can also be a means of transforming society. Theatre can help us build our future, rather than just waiting for it” (1992).

Education through theatre also provides its own unique outcomes. Theatre which is interactive with the audience allows individuals to “...experiment with creative solutions to problems by making a fictitious dramatic world in which we can play with an infinite variety of choices with the great advantage that we do not have to live with the solutions we make” (Cattanach, 1992). Educational theatre is a safe place to practice life and gain social and health promotion skills in a low risk situation.

In the research of psychodrama and drama therapy, there is also evidence of benefits for the individuals in the theatre group as well as for the audience. According to Gordon, “Drama...is also a means of helping us to understand—through experiencing it— the experience, the ‘being’ of the other. Drama is thus one of the best, the most direct means of self and other communication” (1987).

“Will Act for Change” is an educational theatre program created to address health and social issues. This program seeks to, in a sense, provide a mirror for individuals to see

## Rationale

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themselves and either change or reinforce their behavior based on what they see. “Will Act for Change” uses the true stories of individuals to create a safe, non-judgmental, and interactive environment for both the players and the audience to learn skills and gain knowledge that will benefit the physical, emotional, mental, and social health of the individual and the community.

“Humans are capable of seeing themselves in the act of seeing, of thinking their emotions, of being moved by their thoughts. They can see themselves here and imagine themselves there; they can see themselves today and imagine themselves tomorrow” (Boal, 1992).

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- Jennings, S. (Ed.). 1987. *Dramatherapy: Theory and practice for teachers and clinicians*. Massachusetts: Brookline Books.

## Program Goals and Objectives

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### Goals

*“Will Act for Change” is an educational peer theatre group focusing on the following outcomes. After participation within this group, participants should be able to:*

- ✧ Understand the use of theatre as an educational tool for health and social issues.
- ✧ Understand the health and social issues relevant to their community and the resources available to obtain continuing education and assistance around those issues.

### Objectives

*This program strives to create an internal and external educational forum by encouraging participants to:*

- ✧ Develop effective improvisation, facilitation, and public speaking skills necessary for the creation and implementation of performances.
- ✧ Create a safe space within the group to explore and examine health and social issues on a personal and communal level.
- ✧ Develop an understanding of specific health topics such as alcohol and other drugs, sexual health, sexual violence, and issues of oppression, in order to facilitate and participate in discussion with peers and community members.
- ✧ Integrate their creative and personal process into the group in a non-judged and non-judgmental manner.



## **Main Messages**

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Main messages are developed for each group in the Lifestyle Advisor Program. These messages are concise statements that incorporate the main points of each program and are primarily used for social marketing. The following are main messages for “Will Act for Change” and main messages for the risk reduction performances created by this group.

### **Main Messages for “Will Act for Change”**

- ✧ Knowledge is necessary, but insufficient for changing behavior.
- ✧ People remember
  - 10% of what they hear
  - 50% of what they see and hear
  - 90% of what they see, hear, and do
- ✧ Interactive theatre can be therapeutic for the actors and the audience.
- ✧ The personal is political.
- ✧ A performance is a mirror in contrast to a lecture.
- ✧ Performance Education brings social and health issues to life through performance, interaction, discussion, and facilitation.
- ✧ Issues of social justice through the voice of personal stories are a reflection of society’s reality.
- ✧ A performance is an interaction between the actors and the audience.
- ✧ Story-telling is a powerful tool for education.
- ✧ Activism through performance does not require a stage.
- ✧ Interactive theatre is practice for living.

## **Main Messages**

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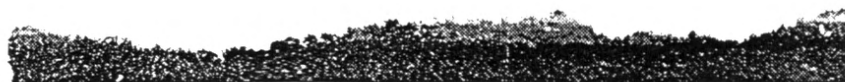
- ✧ Wellness encompasses issues of human dignity and social justice as well as prevention of illness and injury.
- ✧ The difference between actors and performance educators lies in the performers knowledge of a content or topic and the ability to generate an environment where transfer of information and discussion occurs.
- ✧ Theatre is for everyone.

### **Main Messages for risk reduction performances**

- ✧ Most people care about each other.
- ✧ Most people don't want to hurt each other.
- ✧ Most people are basically good.
- ✧ Most people, given a chance, want to protect each other, but there is a misperception that protecting each other is not the norm, that it is not OK to intervene or speak up.
- ✧ You can protect yourself and each other by being aware and taking action.
- ✧ We all take risks in our lives, the goal is to decrease the negative consequences of these risks, increase positive outcomes, and increase protective behavior.



# History



PHIL H. WEBBER/P-I

High after a lunchtime shooting in which two teen-agers were wounded.

January 13, 1995

Dear Parents, Students & Staff:

As you are aware, we had a serious incident. At approximately 12:15 p.m., two students displayed/pulled a firearm and pointed it at the school, discharging a gun both inside and outside the school. Both students are in satisfactory condition at this time. A suspect ran from the scene. The suspect was immediately apprehended in the building.

I have called a meeting for the Board of Education.

# History

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## The Spark

One day in January 1995, I was meeting with a teacher during lunch hour on the first floor of my high school. Suddenly, our conversation was cut short by students screaming, “He’s got a gun, he’s got a gun!” In an instant the teacher fled and the cracking sound of gunfire entered the doorway ten feet behind me. I turned and my eyes filled with smoke and sparks as my arms filled with as many students as I could hold; we stumbled into a classroom, not knowing if bullets would reach our backs. We remained in the room until the school quieted, my grip increasing on a girl who wanted to find her friend whom she feared would get shot. I told her I could not let her go. Three students were injured that day, one of which was her friend.

When I finally left school that afternoon, those terrifying moments ran through my head in continuous play. The story left my mouth over and over again in a rambling shock, as I watched pictures of my high school on the news given the reputation of a violent inner-city school. Students’ arrival at school the next day was tardy and cautious, if at all. Stories of where people were and how teachers responded ebbed and flowed in a heavy current throughout the school, as our community struggled with how to reclaim safety.

During my senior year, I had three distinct leadership positions—co-president of the Drama club, co-president of the Natural Helpers Advisory Board, and reporter for the school newspaper. Each of these groups responded to the shooting immediately. Within the next few days the Natural Helpers made signs to cover the hallway where bullets had ripped off

## History

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the molding and imprinted erratic patterns on the metal doors—signs that read, “Everything will be OK,” “We love our school” and “Take care of yourselves, take care of each other.” The school newspaper put out an emergency issue in three days with articles of what had occurred, interviews with students, and resources for counseling. The Drama club, through one of it’s newest factions, Student Actors for Social Solutions (SASS), created its first performance reenacting the experience of students the day after the shooting which was presented at a community town meeting held at the high school. Each of these responses stemmed from a need for students to heal themselves and give voice to a collective experience in their community. No matter where students, faculty, and staff were at the moment of the shooting, the effect of violence rippled through everyone’s lives. My involvement in each of these projects allowed healing for myself and a chance to share in the healing of my community. Each was significant, however it was my work with SASS that sparked a fire not soon to go out.

The performance created through SASS depicted how students felt the next morning deciding whether or not to attend school, the conversations that transpired in classrooms, and the evolution of feelings by the end of the day. The students who participated in the performance had varying experiences both during and after the shooting, therefore they all told their own story and replayed actual conversations they had participated in. While the media focused on the perpetrator and the victims, our performance attempted to focus on the healing process, on action, and on the voices of students.

## History

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Parents, teachers, students, and community members attended the town meeting where SASS performed. Afterwards, everyone broke into discussion groups to formulate emergency action plans and discuss violence prevention. Instead of partaking in discussion groups with the administration or the media's perception on how the shooting had affected the students, individuals carried the voices of the students themselves. It was difficult to deny the validity, accuracy, or motivation behind those voices because they came true from the heart of each student's experience. Witnessing this process full-circle was a gift; I was able to see the power in an event, creating a performance around that event, and viewing the performance as an outsider or member of the community.

Later that year, another theatre group performed at our school on issues of racism and homophobia. The performers were all professional adult actors who performed a play about dealing with issues of oppression in high school. Each actor played either a high school student or a teacher. My classmates received this information very poorly. Their main criticism was, "What do you know, you are not us, you do not go through what we go through, this is not the truth." I agreed, the performance did not feel genuine nor did it add any perspective on the issues we were dealing with in our high school. Just a few months earlier, students witnessed a performance about an experience in their community, performed by students telling true stories of what happened to them or their friends. The reception was a connection, nods, and tears. Some of us who participated in SASS were approached by fellow students who said, "That was exactly how I felt too," or "Let me tell

## History

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you what happened to me.”

Making the comparison between SASS and the professional theatre began my formation of a personal philosophy around performance education. I realized the significant difference in these two performances did not lie in professionalism, but in the truth of the stories, in the validity of discussing a shared experience in a community, of being students talking with students in an honest, engaging, and interactive way. The students in SASS presented a mirror for their classmates where they could see themselves, the professional theatre presented a painting of their perceptions of students and their lives. Both are valid forms of theatre, yet I feel the former offers the most opportunity for a connection with the audience and a therapeutic environment for the performers.

### **The Fuel: The Lifestyle Advisor Program and “But I Said No”**

At the end of my freshman year in college, I became involved in The Lifestyle Advisor Program through Prevention and Wellness Services. At this time I approached the director of Prevention and Wellness Services, Pat Fabiano, about my interest in starting a social issues theatre group. Although a theatre group was something Pat had always been interested in, the timing was off. So during my sophomore year I immersed myself in the Sexual Assault Prevention group of The Lifestyle Advisor Program. Through this group I received over 40 hours of training in various aspects of sexual assault prevention including, current statistics, the relationship of alcohol to sexual violence, the continuum of sexually violent behaviors, and the definition of consensual sexual activity. The Sexual Assault

## History

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Prevention group was trained to present programs to women on the issue of sexual violence and how to reduce the risk of becoming a victim, and I spent a year presenting programs in the Residence Halls and participating in other outreach projects.

During October of that same year, I was also approached by another student, Russell Sparks, who had heard both about my interest in starting a theatre group and about my involvement with the Sexual Assault Prevention team. Russell wanted to produce a show he had seen in Virginia called, “But I Said No, A Play about Acquaintance Rape,” at Western and asked if I would like to be involved. Six students eventually came together one evening with an interested director, and the show began.

I had never participated in theatre like “But I Said No” before. This was hands-on, messy, independent theatre where we all had a part in stage direction, costumes, publicity, and finding venues for our shows. Even Barb Maier, our director, opened her directing style to include our input. We performed “But I Said No” from December to June in the Residence Halls of Western and Fairhaven, in Bellingham community venues like Allied Arts and The Show-Off Gallery, and we even traveled to Port Townsend High School. Throughout that seven-month period I learned a number of lessons, two of which were instrumental in my creation of “Will Act for Change” the following year.

“But I Said No” focused on all aspects of sexual violence—the law, rape trauma syndrome, consent, gang rape...there was hardly an issue it didn’t touch. After the performance, the audience was encouraged to stay for discussion in order to ask questions,



## History

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brainstorm on sexual violence prevention strategies, and utilize the resources available. Aside from written material and Residence Life staff (if we were in the Residence Halls), a professional experienced in the issues of sexual violence was also present at every show in case anyone required an immediate resource.

After the first few performances, it became obvious only Russell and I had enough training on the topic of sexual violence to lead the post-play discussion. Also, during rehearsal, other members of the troupe expressed feeling uncomfortable during discussion because they lacked the content to back up their lines or answer questions. Thus, the next few rehearsals became a crash-course on the issues of sexual violence. I prepared packets of information from Prevention and Wellness Services and as an ensemble we fleshed out our performance. During this experience, I realized the need for an educational theatre troupe to possess knowledge of the content theatrically presented in order to have any validity with the audience or themselves. Without content, education cannot occur and the performance ends with the applause instead of continuing with discussion. Performance education has two parts and both require equal attention.

The second lesson I came away with was one of self-confidence and a broader vision of theatre. Theatre became something tangible that I could access as an undergraduate, bring to other people, and create on my own. The experience of participating as an actor, yet having part as a director and producer, gave me an insight into the theatrical process I had never had before.

## History

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### **The Fire: “Will Act for Change”**

When another student approached Pat with an interest in performance education, she immediately called me in. Shannon was interested in participating, however she did not have the desire nor the training to create or lead a theatre group of this nature. It was the spring before my junior year in college and I remember sitting in Pat’s office with what I knew was a life-changing opportunity in front of me. I wanted to be a peer HIV tester in The Lifestyle Advisor Program the next year, and my supervisor felt I had a good chance with my experience in the Sexual Assault Prevention group. However, the picture of my future on Western’s campus morphed as I asked myself, “When am I ever going to get the opportunity again, to create my dream in the midst of a well-developed, supported program?” As frightened as I was, to have the blank page of program development staring me in the face, my heart rate accelerated with emotions other than fear. The excitement and passion was reminiscent of first love; of emotions that come with beginnings, with exploration, with a desire to know just how long this feeling can last. I took that offer, of developing and leading the new performance education group. I took it and ran.

The process of developing the training for the first performance education group took place over the summer of 1997. Shirley Osterhaus, director of the Catholic Campus Ministries and volunteer staff member at Prevention and Wellness Services, offered her support as an additional trainer which I gladly accepted. Shirley’s strengths were in group development, but her primary role for me was more of a sounding board and support system.

## History

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Both Shirley and Pat echoed my excitement and offered their reassurance, and I knew I was not the only one warmed by the fire of what was to come.

This ends the context and history around the formation of “Will Act for Change.” Further reflection on the groups throughout the years are noted later in the Reflection section of this manual.

- Emotion Machine
- introduction
- a. "basic" emotions – one machine w/action
- c. add sound

- IV. Developing relationships
- b. Arguments – as a warm-up
- c. "1-2-3-4...5-6-7-8"
- d. Triangles

## LUNCH

- 1:00
- V. Monologue Spots
- 1:15

# Fall Training

12:00 – 1:00

1:00 – 1:15

1:15 – 1:30

1:30 – 2:00

Mirror Ex.  
mirror  
follow  
Journal

2:00 – 2:10

BREAK

2:10 – 3:00

Touching Exer.  
hands  
face

3:00 – 3:45

Share in pairs  
circle

1:00

- Announcements, Intro
- Introductions (names)
- a. Physical – shake-up
- b. Vocal – "lips, tee"

2:30

- II. Introductions
- a. Truth and Lies
- Common C
- Wagon V
- d. Visualiz

BREAK

3:45

VI.



### I n t r o d u c t i o n

Fall Training is a very specific ten-day event that occurs as part of The Lifestyle Advisor Program under which “Will Act for Change” was created. After Lifestyle Advisors are placed in a specific topic group, they must return to school two weeks before classes start and participate in a forty-hour training on that topic.

The specifics of Fall Training are included in this section of the manual. A guide for organizing the training period can be found in *Building a Calendar*. The materials for each exercise can be found in the Materials section of this manual under the specific appendices listed in the Table of Contents.

Fall Training is a crucial time for team building, skill training, and performance development. Any time a performance education group is created, I would recommend a similar training period.



### W e l c o m e

The first day of Fall Training has always been the most awkward moment for me; nobody knows each other, the level of trust is down, and expectations run high. I continually find myself facing the fear of, *what if this doesn't work this time, what if I can't do it again?* The first year was especially difficult as I found myself trying to explain performance education to a group of five women, before I really knew what it was myself.

Because I did not perceive “welcomes” as my strong point, I never really focused on them. During this time, I took the opportunity to explain any differing situations—such as the position of a student coordinator in 1999-2000—and go over logistics related to the specifics of The Lifestyle Advisor Program. Some of the key points to address are the following:

- ✪ Reminder about turning in schedules for use in finding a weekly meeting time and rehearsal times for the quarter.
- ✪ Explain volunteer hour sheets.
- ✪ Pass out name tags (only important for the first day).
- ✪ Go over expectations for training and for their role as a Lifestyle Advisor, including the policy on alcohol and other drugs (may take a few discussions).
- ✪ Give an overview of the training.
- ✪ Reminder that this is their group and the importance of commitment and respect for each other and the group leader(s).



### **G r o u n d r u l e s**

Groundrules are important any time you have a group of people who do not know each other engaging in intimate or unfamiliar activities or discussion. I have included a list incorporating basic groundrules and also some specific to performance education. There are individual variations in dealing with groundrules; some like to ask the group if there are any they would like to add, others like to write them down and post them in the room, and others like to ask everyone in the group to raise their hand and agree upon the groundrules decided. The following are some I have found important:

- ✧ Disagree without attacking.
- ✧ What is said here stays here.
- ✧ Use “I” statements when talking.
- ✧ It is OK to pass.
- ✧ Training can become progressively emotional—take care of yourself, take care of each other.
- ✧ Utilize your support system—including the facilitator and other PWS staff.
- ✧ Respect each others stories.
- ✧ Let the facilitator know if you are uncomfortable, need to leave., or if you cannot make it to training, rehearsals, or meetings.
- ✧ There is no expectation for disclosure. Individuals may share a lot of personal feelings, but you are not expected to. Please go at your own pace.



# T r a d i t i o n s

Building a group identity is very important in performance education because of the high level of trust involved, the sensitive issues addressed, and the involvement of students unfamiliar with theatre. Therefore, there are a few traditions I have implemented in the past few years which have proved useful in maintaining the cohesiveness needed for this type of group.

### **The Journal**

I first made journals for the 1998-1999 group which I passed out during one of the last days of training. I did not give explicit instructions on how to use the journal, only that writing was one way of processing the experience of being in this group. Most students used them as a combination scrapbook and journal documenting their year.

For the 1999-2000 group I again made journals that I passed out on the first day of training. I was more intentional about their use during the quarter—often designating a time to write during training, or asking students to go home to write on a topic or question.

It is not imperative the journals be handmade. I felt putting effort into the journals helped the students realize my commitment to the group and how serious I took their participation. Because much of performance education focuses on processing and discussion, I think it is important for individuals to have an awareness around the various means of processing through issues, and practice using a journal. I had one individual comment in the



## Fall Training

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1999-2000 group that he had never written in a journal except for superficial class assignments, and after the first night of training he went home and wrote seven pages.

### **“Focus-Check”**

This is a technique I learned at The Seattle Children’s Theatre for getting the attention of little kids in drama groups. I liked it so much I decided to incorporate it into performance education.

#### **What to do:**

When one person wants the attention of the whole group they yell, “Focus!” The rest of the group must stop what they are doing, look at the person who yelled “Focus” and yell, “Check!” Simple, yet empowering.

I have the group sit in a circle and practice this technique with each person getting a chance to yell “Focus” and have everyone respond with “Check.” In this way they know it is not a tool only the leader will use, but something for everyone. I believe this exercise builds respect, empowering anyone to call the attention of a large group of people knowing there will be a response.

Sometimes toward the end of the year we have to revisit the purpose of “Focus-Check” as there is a tendency for people to yell, “Check” and then go back to talking. It is important not to lose the intent of the exercise.



### **“Ready...Break”**

I don't know where I picked this up, possibly from team sports. I am a strong believer in closure and energizers and this exercise is a good way to re-focus a group or wrap-up after a meeting, rehearsal, or performance.

#### **What to do:**

Gather the group in a circle, hold hands, and open the circle up for any last minute reminders, pep-talks, etc. Then have everyone join in by saying, “Ready...1-2-3 Break!” Everyone then drops hands and goes their separate ways.

This technique is useful for doing any last-minute check-ins after a hard meeting or for any last words right before a performance. I have also found the times we forget to do “Ready-Break” the group seems more disjointed.



### B u i l d i n g   A   C a l e n d a r

In this type of group every individual has varying degrees of theatre experience. Therefore, it is important to start slow and build, both in intensity and skill development, throughout the training period. If you have a limited training period, as in The Lifestyle Advisor Program, the following suggestions may seem fast. However, this program was developed as a crash-course and a way to involve everyone in theatre, it is not professional theatre development. Here are some suggestions in building a training calendar.

Warm-ups should occur every day as a way to loosen people up, physically and emotionally. I would suggest the first day consist of primarily team building exercises and introductory improvisation exercises. Working in partners is also an option to build individual connections— especially if the group is large and the team building exercises seem overwhelming. Also, if you detect cliques, creating different pairs is a way to offset that. The second day, move onto advanced improvisation exercises unless you feel the group still needs more bonding time or has not fully grasped the concept of improvisation.

I have only done contact games when the group has asked for them—either for a more physical connection or for practice when there is physical contact in performances. Once the group seems comfortable with each other and with theatre, move on to additional skills such as facilitation, quadrilogues, and performance building. Keep in mind that the risk reduction performances must be developed during Fall Training.

## Fall Training

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I have found some groups love games others don't. This may seem like an elementary concept, however it is important to recognize the dynamics of your particular group—whether it be serious, playful, intense, or mellow. For example, the 1997-1998 group was very serious and did not enjoy warm-ups like “Vive Las Vegas” or sillier improvisational games like “3-headed monster.” However, the 1998-1999 group was very demonstrative and loved those type of games. Therefore, I have included more activities than there would be time to do with the idea the facilitator would pick and choose according to what they like personally and the dynamics of the group. You may find the group really enjoys monologues or needs more practice working together. Whatever you discover, it is important to tailor the training calendar each year depending on the group.

Within the training period of The Lifestyle Advisor Program, I have also set up something called cross training for “Will Act for Change.” Cross training, in the past, has been three days where members of “Will Act for Change” are split up and put in other topic groups in order to gain skills, knowledge, and performance ideas. The topic groups are usually Alcohol and Other Drugs, Rubberwear, Sexual Assault Prevention, and Western Men Against Violence. Others to consider are Positive Body Image and The Ally Building Network. This period of cross training is essential to the philosophy of performance education, as it is important for the group to have education in health and social issues as well as theatre. A reform of cross training has been suggested; to bring in people to educate the group as a whole on these issues instead of breaking up the group.



# N a m e   G a m e s

## Truth Truth Lie

*Source:*        *unknown*

### What to do:

Have individuals sit in a circle. Pass out index cards and pencils. Give them a few minutes to write down two things that are true about them and one thing that is a lie. There are no other rules about what can be written down. After everyone is finished, one person should start by saying their name and everything on their card. Everyone else in the group must guess which statement is a lie. Each person takes a turn.

## Names Within a Song

*Source:*        *Megan Kennedy*

### What to do:

Have everyone stand in a circle and think of a song they can insert their name into. The song must be one they can sing at least a few lines from. For example: "Itsy bitsy \_\_\_\_\_ climbed up the water spout. Down came the rain and washed the \_\_\_\_\_ out." The individual would insert their name in the blanks. Any song is OK. One person starts and sings their song, then everyone sings it back to them. The game moves around the circle.

## My Moves

*Source:*        *Megan Kennedy*

### What to do:

Have everyone stand in a circle and give a few moments for each person to think of a gesture or movement that represents them. One person starts by saying their name and demonstrating their move or gesture. Everyone repeats back the move and the gesture back to them at the same time. The game moves around the circle.

*Note: This game turned out to be a big hit with the 1998-1999 group. Names stuck like, "Katie, I'm riding a pony" which was her name and an explanation of her gesture because we could not tell what she was doing.*



### W a r m - u p s

Warm-ups are an important part of each day you are together as a group. Not only does warming up help the group loosen up physically, vocally, and emotionally, but participating in unexpected and playful activities reconnects everyone to a single purpose. Some of these warm-ups are purely vocal, some purely physical, and some are a combination. It is important to mix and match to find the right combination for your particular group. It is the facilitator's job to determine when the group is sufficiently "warmed up."

#### Old King Cole

*Source: The Seattle Children's Theatre*

Old King Cole is a \_\_\_\_\_ old soul

And a \_\_\_\_\_ old soul was he.

He called for his wine,

He called for his bowl,

He called for his fiddlers three.

#### What to do:

The blanks should be filled in with adjectives by the facilitator (I.e. tired, grumpy, joyful). Have participants walk around the room saying this rhyme, filling in the blanks and the emotion behind the rhyme with the assigned adjective. Repeat with different adjectives.

## Fall Training

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### Vive Las Vegas

*Source: The Seattle Children's Theatre*

#### What to do:

Participants are to stand in a circle and face the right so they are looking at the back of the person in front of them. Give the following instructions:

Put your hands in the air and shake them like you are holding a tambourine, yelling "Vive Las Vegas!" Then give an Elvis-like "huh" and jump to face the left. Repeat.

*Note: This exercise can be repeated as often as desired, variations include walking around in the circle or walking in and out of the circle. This is an energizer so give permission to be funky and loose!*

### Shake-Out

*Source: The Seattle Children's Theatre*

#### What to do:

Have participants stand in a circle. This is a physical exercise that involves shaking the right arm, then the left arm, then the right leg, then the left leg. Begin by "shaking out" your right arm to the count of "1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8." Move to the left arm, the right leg, and the left leg. Then cut the count time in half to "1-2-3-4" and move down the body. Then cut the count time in half again to "1-2" and move down the body. The final "1" should be an all over shake-out of "1-1-1-1-1!"

*Note: This exercise became an immediate favorite of "Will Act for Change" in the 1998-1999 group. So much so that we began doing this warm-up in the different languages people were fluent in like Spanish, Cantonese, German, and Eritrean.*

### Silent Alphabet

*Source: Jim Lortz*

#### What to do:

Standing in a circle, participants are to silently mouth the alphabet. Encourage over-enunciating as the purpose of this exercise is to stretch facial muscles.

## Fall Training

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### Arguments

*Source: Augusto Boal*

#### What to do:

Divide the group into pairs. This warm-up takes place all at once so give the instructions first. When the facilitator says go, one person in each pair begins by making a statement. The other person says the complete opposite (no matter what their personal belief is) and the conversation continues in that matter. Give a benign example and remind people not to get too personal. For example, one person could begin by saying, “The sky is blue.” The other person must disagree.

### Library Lions

*Source: Jim Lortz*

#### What to do:

Participants should stand in a circle with their hands out in front of them in a fist. On the count of three everyone tightens their face by sucking in their cheeks and squeezing their eyes shut and simultaneously squeezing their fists shut. The facilitator then begins by “popping” open —opening her eyes, mouth, and hands as wide as possible. The “popping” sound cues the rest of the group to do the same thing.

### Between Us

*Source: The Seattle Children’s Theatre*

#### What to do:

Divide the group into pairs. Each pair should stand about two feet away from each other. Give the following instructions:

Pretend there is a stick that connects your foreheads together. The stick cannot bend, nor can it get longer or shorter. Begin to move around the room, keeping the stick between your foreheads. Remember that if your partner moves forward the stick pushes you backwards.

*Note: Variations on this exercise include connecting different points of the body (I.e. stomach to foot, hand to nose, etc.), or experimenting with the length of the stick.*



## Fall Training

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### Focus

*Source: unknown*

#### What to do:

Participants should stand in a circle and hold hands. Individuals can either close their eyes, make eye contact, or focus on a particular spot on the floor—whichever is more comfortable. The object of this exercise is to count to ten, one person at a time, without talking at the same time. If more than one person says a number or even starts to say a number, you must start back at one. There is no cue to start.

*Note: This is a good focusing warm-up to use before a performance if individuals tend to feel scattered or hectic. Some years people have found it too serious—once again it depends on the group.*

### Look

*Source: unknown*

#### What to do:

Have participants stand in a circle and hold hands. On the cue of “Ready,” everyone looks down in the center and says “1-2-3-Look.” On “Look” everyone must look up at someone else in the circle. If the person you are looking at is also looking at you, you both scream and are out of the circle. The game continues until one or two people are left.

*Note: This exercise was brought to the group by a member of the 1998-1999 troupe. They loved it and played it every chance they got. Another variation is to play silent “Look” where, instead of screaming when you get out, you stamp your foot.*

## Fall Training

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### Fill The Space

Source: Susan Biles

#### What to do:

Have everyone line up. The first person in line starts by making a pose, preferably one they can hold for a period of time. The next person in line comes up and tries to fill the space around their body with their own body.

*Note: A variation that I developed for this exercise was the incorporation of monologues. The first person starts and delivers a monologue that is true for them about anything they want while creating a pose. When they stop, the next person comes up and fills the space while delivering a monologue sparked by the previous person. This variation was created spur of the moment on a retreat with the 1998-1999 group. It ended up being one of the most emotional and healing exercises we did. The combination of movement and story-telling struck deep for many people.*

### Vocal Warm-ups

Source: The Seattle Children's Theatre and Jim Lortz

#### What to do:

These phrases are all used in a repetitious format to practice enunciation, projection, and to stretch the facial muscles. Make sure the group emphasizes the beginning and ending of each word.

- ✪ Red leather, yellow leather...*(repeat)*
- ✪ I know New York, I need New York, I know I need unique New York. *(repeat)*
- ✪ The lips, the teeth, the tip of the tongue... *(repeat)*



# T e a m   B u i l d i n g

Team-building exercises focus on cooperation, creating a positive group dynamic, and getting to know one another. These exercises provide groundwork by building trust and support among group members which is needed in performance. Once again, some of these exercises are serious and focus on revealing personal information, others are more active and focus on kinesthetic bonding. All exercises involve all members of the group who choose to participate. Although it is not mentioned, it is important to debrief after most of these exercises. Of course, it is up to the leader's discretion.

## Wagon Wheel

*Source: American Friends Service Committee*

### What to do:

There must be an even number of participants for this exercise to work, this may mean the facilitator participates. Two circles are formed, one on the inside of the other. The inside circle should face out and the outside circle should face in—creating a number of pairs. The facilitator designates who will start, inside or outside, and then reads a question. When the facilitator says go, one member of the pair answers the question to the other member. All pairs are talking at once. The facilitator times this exchange—allowing one minute for each question. The first person must talk for the entire minute. Then the facilitator says “switch” at which point the other person in the pair answers the question. There should be no talking by the person who is the listener in the pair. After each question, the facilitator designates the movement of the circles, for example, “Outside circle move two to your left.” The exercise continues.

*Note: This is an interesting and intimate way for individuals to share information with a large group of people. In the end, everyone feels that they have had a personal interaction with every member of the group. I usually begin training with this exercise.*



### Emotion Machine

*Source:* Viola Spolin

**What to do:**

Either have a variety of emotions ready or brainstorm a list of emotions with the group and post them on the wall. Pick one emotion to start. One at a time each person enters the performance space and begins a repetitive motion that they feel represents the emotion picked. The motions may interact, but there should be no physical contact. The object of this exercise is to create a “machine” or “factory” of that particular emotion.

*Note:* One variation on this exercise is for individuals to add a sound to their motion.

### Emotional Symphony

*Source:* Andy Goldberg

**What to do:**

Similar to the machine, but with sound only. Once again, the facilitator or group picks an emotion to start. Give the group a couple minutes and have each person think of a sound that represents that emotion to them. Ask for a symphony to volunteer (the facilitator can designate the number of individuals in the symphony) and a conductor. The symphony should sit in chairs with the conductor facing them, much like a real orchestra. The conductor then conducts the symphony. She has the ability to make the symphony loud or soft and to have any number of “instruments” play together.

*Note:* There is immense freedom in this exercise and it is a fun ending to have everyone in the group join the symphony for a finale!

### Human Appliance

*Source:* unknown

**What to do:**

Divide the group up into subgroups of three or four. Pass out one card to each subgroup that has the name of an appliance on it. Each subgroup gets 5-10 minutes to prepare a physical, animated representation of that appliance—sounds may be used, but no actual words. Subgroups are to present their appliance in front of the other groups so they can try to guess what their appliance is.

## Fall Training

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### **Sculpt**

*Source:*           *unknown*

#### **What to do:**

Get four volunteers from the group—two to be the clay and two to be the sculptors. Send the clay out of the room. Have the sculptors request a situation from the remaining group that they would like to see sculpted. Bring the clay back in the room. Instruct the clay to be pliable, yet cooperative as their sculptors mold them. Remember, faces can be molded too! After the sculptors finish, give the clay the opportunity to guess what their sculpture is.

### **Third Eye**

*Source:*           *Daisye Orr*

#### **What to do:**

The day before you wish to lead the exercise, ask each person to bring in something important to them (not too valuable, breakable, or hard to carry around) the next day. When the objects are brought in, ask everyone to put them in the middle of the room. Once all the objects are in a pile, have each person pick an object they did not bring. One at a time, have each person do a monologue on why the particular object they are holding is important to them as if they brought it themselves. Once that person is finished, they must stay standing while the person who really brought the object comes up and does a short monologue on why the object is actually important to them. Go through each object this way.

### **Unassisted Trust Walk**

*Source:*           *Jim Lortz*

#### **What to do:**

The leader should scout out an effective place to lead this exercise beforehand, preferably outdoors, and bring a drum or something akin to a drum. Once the group has assembled, have everyone pair up. One person in the pair is blindfolded and the other is not. The leader should then go a good distance away from the pairs and begin to drum. The person who is blindfolded has the goal of reaching the leader by following the sound of the drum. The other person assists them by making sure they are not in physical danger. They are not to touch the blindfolded person unless they absolutely need to, and they should not talk.

*Note: There are many variations on the trust walk, leading by touch or leading by voice are two of the most popular. This trust walk was introduced to the 1998-1999 group by Jim Lortz, who is a very skilled facilitator and would be a good resource if available.*

## Fall Training

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### Common Ground

Source: *American Friends Service Committee*

#### What to do:

Have everyone stand in a circle, make sure they do not hold hands. Instruct participants that when they are ready one person starts by taking a step into the middle of the circle and revealing something about themselves. It may be helpful for the facilitator to model by stepping into the circle and revealing something benign, for example, "I like chocolate ice cream." Anyone else who decides they like chocolate ice cream then takes one step out into the circle, a moment is shared, and everyone steps back. It is important to lay out the groundrule that if someone shares something it is not appropriate to approach them after the exercise and ask them about it, nor is it appropriate to ask questions during the exercise. If someone shares and no one else steps out, the leader should validate that person for having something about them that is totally unique to the group. The exercise goes on as long as the facilitator or the group likes.

*Note: This was one of the most popular exercises with the 1998-1999 group. It is simple and effective for group bonding. This is a powerful exercise to close with on the first day of training.*

### Essences

Source: *Megan Kennedy*

#### What to do:

In a circle, choose someone to go first. Instruct that person to think of someone in the group without revealing who they're thinking of. Going around the circle, each person in the group is to ask that person a question about who they're thinking of. The questions are representational, for example: If this person was a tree, what type of tree would they be? The person then answers what type of tree they feel represents who they are thinking of. Once everyone has asked a question, it is time to vote. On the count of three, everyone in the group points to who they think it is. The actual person is then revealed.

*Note: This is a good coffee house game, as it is casual and fun. Let people be as creative as they want with the questions they ask. For instance, one person has asked, "If this person was a speed, what speed would they be?"*

## Fall Training

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### **These Boots Are Made For...**

*Source: Daisy Orr*

#### **What to do:**

Instruct everyone to take off one of their shoes and put it in the center of the room. They should keep their other shoe on. Then hand out index cards and pencils and ask everyone to pick a shoe that is not their own and find a place in the room. Instruct participants to examine the shoe they picked and write down their observations and what they think that says about the person who wears the shoe. When everyone is finished, they are to give their shoe back to its original owner. It is up to the participant whether or not they also want to give that person their card.

*Note: I created and led this game in a theatre class, but I have never tried it with "Will Act for Change." Let me know how it works!*



# P a r t n e r   B u i l d i n g

Working in partners is a way to build relationships, especially if there is a large number of people in the group. I also use partner exercises as a springboard for developing performances. If there are people in the group that were friends previous to their involvement, this is a good time to split them up and force them to form other relationships. I used partner building extensively in the 1999-2000 troupe in order to mix the returning members with the new members. Once again, it is important to debrief after most of these exercises.

### Mirror Exercises

*Source: unknown*

#### What to do:

The pairs began by sitting across from one another. A leader is chosen who begins slow movements with her hands. The other person mirrors her movements as if she is her reflection. As the pairs become more comfortable, they may choose to stand up and move around. After awhile, have the pairs switch who is leading. The goal of this exercise is to progress to the point where the movements become fluid and it is difficult to determine who is leading.

### Call Outs

*Source: Megan Kennedy and Daisye Orr*

#### What to do:

This exercise is similar to Wagon Wheel, except individuals stay with the same people. The leader calls out a question and gives a minute for one person to respond to their partner. The leader then yells, "Switch" and allows the other person to answer the same question. The exercise continues for as long as the leader deems necessary.



## Fall Training

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### Share in Pairs

Source: *Daisye Orr*

#### What to do:

This exercise is similar to Call Outs, except that I use it specifically for developing scenes around various content areas. Instruct each individual to find a place alone in the room and spend some time writing down their stories relating to specific topics (for development of the risk reduction performances I use alcohol and other drugs, sexual health, sexual violence, and issues of oppression or being an ally). Then in pairs, have individuals share the stories they feel comfortable sharing and the ones they feel would make an appropriate scene. Pairs share in the large group what they have come up with.

### Touching Exercises

Source: *Jim Lortz*

#### What to do:

Partners are to sit across from one another and hold hands. Instruct partners to choose who will touch first. The person who is being touched closes their eyes. The partner touching spends time exploring her partner's hands. After they are finished, the partners switch. Then both people close their eyes and the same exercise occurs with the face.

*Note: This exercise is very intimate and is possibly one of the more transforming exercises in terms of developing relationships. It is a chance for individuals to appreciate one another on an intimate, yet platonic level and can become very emotional. This exercise can also take a very long time to complete and discuss so it is important to block out an appropriate amount of time so as not to rush the process.*

*At retreats, it is possible to extend this exercise to include the full body. However, specific groundrules around comfort level, personal space, and permission to touch must be laid out. Partners must always ask permission to touch each other and have a discussion beforehand about what parts of the body are OK to touch or not to touch. I have also used this exercise as a contact game for students participating in a scene with physical contact.*

### Be Me

Source: *Daisye Orr*

#### What to do:

Have each pair choose a leader. Instruct the pairs to then play follow the leader. The goal of the follower is to learn to walk like their leader. Have them stop and learn to stand like their leader. Switch leaders and repeat the exercise.



# B e g i n n i n g I m p r o v i s a t i o n

There are books upon books on improvisation, or acting without a script. My philosophy is to introduce individuals to the concepts of speaking in front of groups, playing, telling their own stories, and interacting with others in a public manner. Because many individuals in this type of group are not theatre majors, these may all be fairly new concepts. Start slow and encourage creativity and enjoyment. They will not think they are learning anything because they are having so much fun. Go with it. They are growing and gaining skills, perhaps just not in the way they are used to.

### 1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8

*Source: Seattle Children's Theatre*

#### **What to do:**

Have everyone line up in two lines facing each other, each person should have a partner. One line can only say, "1-2-3-4" and the other line can only say, "5-6-7-8." The leader then calls out a relationship, for example, "Rival athletes." Simultaneously, each pair greets one another with their established number line. The numbers act as words in a conversation, and the relationship should be established by vocal tone and body language.

### **The Chair is...**

*Source: Seattle Children's Theatre*

#### **What to do:**

Set a chair in the middle of the room. Have the group line up and ask the first person to sit on the chair. Once they sit down, give them an adjective for what the chair feels like, for example, "The chair is hot." Continue through the group until you run out of adjectives.

## Fall Training

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### What Are You doing?

*Source: unknown*

#### What to do:

Have everyone form a line. Ask for one volunteer to stand in front of the group. The first person in line comes forward and asks, “What are you doing?” That person must say an activity other than what they are doing, for example, “I’m eating an ice cream cone.” The person who asked must then pretend to eat an ice cream cone. The next person in line comes forward and asks, “What are you doing?” The person eating the ice cream cone must say some other activity besides eating an ice cream cone. If they fail to do so or hesitate for too long, they are out of the game.

### Three-Headed Monster

*Source: Seattle Children’s Theatre*

#### What to do:

Ask for four volunteers to come to the front of the room. Have three of them link arms, they are the three-headed monster. Then ask the audience for a situation. Instruct the four volunteers to act out their situation. However, each head in the three-headed monster can only say one word at a time.

*Note: Variations on this exercise are having two three-headed monsters interact in a scene, or having the stipulation on the three heads be that they all have to speak at the same time.*

### Fruit Opera

*Source: Seattle Children’s Theatre*

#### What to do:

Have the group stand in a circle. Go around the circle and have each person pick a fruit. Go around the circle again and have each person sing the name of their fruit—in any way they want. Then have everyone sit down and ask for three volunteers. Ask the audience for a situation. The volunteers must act out that situation, yet they can only sing the name of their fruit. No other verbals or vocals may be used.

*Note: The number of volunteers is up to the leader.*

## Fall Training

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### **Audience Describes A Professor**

*Source: Daisye Orr and Megan Kennedy*

#### **What to do:**

Ask for a volunteer to teach the class and have them leave the room. Then ask the remaining group for a movement, a personality trait, and a lecture. Inform the volunteer what their movement, trait, and lecture is and that they are going to teach the class on that particular lecture. They can enter the room whenever they're ready.

### **Monologue Spots**

*Source: Daisye Orr*

#### **What to do:**

Have a variety of words printed out on index cards and lay them face down on the floor. The first person to start must pick a word and perform a two minute monologue on that word that is true for them. The time constraint is flexible and only used as a framework so participants don't get overwhelmed. As the exercise continues, there are two varieties. Either the rest of the group can also perform their monologues on the first word (which illustrates different experiences around the same topic), or each person can pick a new word which is faster.

*Note: This is the exercise that "Will Act for Change" was built upon, around the philosophy of using true stories in performances. I usually do this exercise on two consecutive days. The first day I use more benign words like "friend" or "school," and the second day I use more loaded terms such as "blood" or "love."*



# A d v a n c e d I m p r o v i s a t i o n

## Monologue Plus Spot

*Source: Daisye Orr*

### What to do:

This exercise works similar to Monologue Spots. After each person presents their monologue, ask the audience what emotions they saw in the person or their story. Then ask for volunteers to come up and portray those emotions with the performer as she is giving her monologue a second time. Debrief the difference in the two experiences.

## Revelations

*Source: Augusto Boal*

### What to do:

Ask for two volunteers to improvise a scene. Ask the audience for a relationship between the two volunteers, for example, parent and child. The scene begins when the pair meets and begins a generalized conversation they believe would happen in that type of relationship. Then the facilitator directs one person to make a revelation. This person must then reveal something of great importance that would change the relationship for better or worse. The other person reacts to the revelation and the conversation continues. The facilitator then directs the other person to make a revelation and the conversation continues. The facilitator then directs one person to leave and improvise a separation.

## The Harold

*Source: Andy Goldberg*

### What to do:

A harold is a series of scenes and monologues all pertaining to one topic. There are no other rules, which makes it one of the more difficult improvisation exercises. Start by getting a word from the group and then see what happens. Characters may come in and out of the scenes and monologues at any time and reoccur throughout the harold.



### **Theatre of the Oppressed**

*Source: Augusto Boal*

#### **What to do:**

Brainstorm a list with participants of relationships where there is potential for oppression. It may be helpful to have a discussion or overview on the meaning of oppression, power, and privilege first. Then ask for two volunteers to pick a relationship and improvise a scene where oppression occurs in that relationship. After the scene ends, the facilitator asks the audience what they would do in that situation to minimize the oppression. After discussion, ask for a volunteer to come up and attempt to minimize the oppression in that situation.

*Note: This exercise was the foundation for audience interaction in the performances. Boal works with the person being oppressed to try and minimize their own oppression. I work with a third party and ask how an ally could minimize the oppression in the scene.*

### **Hitchhiker**

*Source: Andy Goldberg*

#### **What to do:**

Brainstorm a list of emotions with the group. Ask each person to pick an emotion, making sure there is no overlap. Then ask for four volunteers, one person to drive the car and three hitchhikers. Set up a car formation with four chairs. The driver is neutral, yet each hitchhiker has an emotion and should act out that emotion. Have the driver start the scene, and pick up the first hitchhiker. When that hitchhiker gets into the car, the driver takes on her emotion. When the driver picks up the next hitchhiker then everyone in the car takes on that hitchhiker's emotion. And so on.

### **Tag-Team Improv**

*Source: Daisye Orr*

#### **What to do:**

Have a number of scenarios already developed. For each scenario, make out two cards for each role with letters on them and a goal for that person in the scene. For each role, there are two people, one on stage and one in the audience. During the scene, each role is trying to stick with their goal. As the scene is acted out, the person on stage may choose to "tag" out and have their partner replace them at any time, and as many times as they want. This continues until the scene has ended.

## Fall Training

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# C o n t a c t   G a m e s

I do not use contact games all of the time in training. Sometimes a group will ask for exercises with more physical contact because they don't feel they've had enough kinesthetic bonding. Contact games are effective when a group is ready and comfortable with each other, or when a group is working on scenes with physical or intimate touch.

### **Pass The Apple**

*Source: Susan Biles*

#### **What to do:**

Have the group stand in a line. Place an apple (or some other round object) under the chin of the first person in line. That person must then pass the apple to the next person in line only using their neck. The exercise continues until the apple gets to the end of the line.

### **Suck And Blow**

*Source: Susan Biles*

#### **What to do:**

Have the group stand in a line. Place a piece of paper on the mouth of the first person in line. They must suck air in, in order to get the paper to stay. That person must then pass the paper to the next person in line using only their mouth—hence the name, suck and blow.

*Note: This exercise works best with thin paper, although there is more physical contact.*

### **Cinnamon Roll**

*Source: unknown*

#### **What to do:**

Have everyone stand in a line holding hands. The first person starts by rolling down the line. The group, in effect, is wrapped up in a big circle with the first person in the middle.

## Fall Training

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### Hug Circle

*Source:*        *Seattle Children's Theatre*

#### **What to do:**

Have everyone stand in a circle. The first person starts by hugging the person next to them and then continues down the circle. The next person follows and so on. When the first person gets back to their original place in the circle, after she has hugged everyone, she stands and waits to be hugged again.





### O t h e r   S k i l l s

The two specific skills addressed in the next few exercises are quadrilogues and facilitation. Quadrilogues refer to a monologue given for someone else, usually in terms of what that character is thinking. Facilitation is necessary in all performances, either by one main person, or shared responsibility within the group. Facilitation is a difficult skill to grasp, and is best learned by modeling and practice. If there is facilitation training in The Lifestyle Advisor Fall training, it is recommended (if it works within the schedule) for the group to attend.

#### **Conversation**

*Source:           Daisye Orr*

##### **What to do:**

Have two copies of each script ready. Ask for two volunteers to read the script. Then ask for two more volunteers to come up and pick a person to stand beside. They are then to deliver a monologue explaining what their character is thinking at that moment, and the story behind their actions.

#### **Theatre Of The Oppressed Quadrilogues**

*Source:           Augusto Boal and Daisye Orr*

##### **What to do:**

An extended version of Theatre of the Oppressed. After the first pair has set up the oppressive scene, the facilitator freezes the scene. Ask for two volunteers to come up, pick a person to stand beside, and deliver a quadrilogue, the more specific the better. Then, based on the new information received from the quadrilogue, a volunteer is asked to come up and try to minimize the oppression in the scene.

*Note: This exercise is also a framework for the risk reduction performances.*



### **Facilitate A Character**

*Source: Daisye Orr*

#### **What to do:**

Have a monologue ready for each person in the group. These are monologues selected by the facilitator from monologue books or other literature. It is recommended that the monologues illustrate a variety of experiences in terms of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, class, etc. Each person is then given some time to read their monologue and think about the issues it presents. Each person should then read their monologue aloud and practice facilitating their character. Questions to consider are: *What issues am I dealing with? How do you think I'm feeling?* Encourage participants to dig deep into the issues they feel are important in the monologue. Remind them to ask open-ended questions (questions that cannot be answered with a yes or no), follow-up with statements made in the audience by asking "Why," and to take some time to wait for responses.

*Note: A variation on this exercise is to pair up people with a monologue and have them facilitate together.*



# C r o s s   T r a i n i n g

As mentioned before, cross training is an essential part of performance education. This is the time for the group to obtain information on health and social issues affecting their community. Usually, “Will Act for Change” spends about three days receiving information on topics of alcohol and other drugs, sexual health, sexual violence, body image, and being an ally. In the past this information has been disseminated by the staff proficient in those topics.

There are a variety of ways to facilitate cross training. The primary goal is for individuals in the group to receive basic knowledge in these topic areas, discuss the application of these topic areas to their community, and apply that knowledge in the creation and implementation of performances.

The following are specific topics in each content area that members of “Will Act for Change” should be familiar with.

### **Alcohol and Other Drugs**

- ✪ Blood Alcohol Content charts and Biphasic Model
- ✪ Signs of an alcohol emergency
- ✪ Drink size, the relative levels of alcohol in beer, wine, and liquor
- ✪ The alcohol policy of WWU and laws in Washington state
- ✪ Referrals and resources on and off campus



### **Sexual Health**

- ✧ Basic information on sexually transmitted infections
- ✧ Latex options
- ✧ Basic information on various birth control methods
- ✧ How to do a condom, dam, and glove demonstration
- ✧ Referrals and resources on and off campus

### **Sexual Violence**

- ✧ The violence continuum
- ✧ Consent
- ✧ Rape trauma syndrome
- ✧ The relationship between sexual violence and alcohol consumption
- ✧ The difference between a perpetrator, victim, and survivor
- ✧ What is “blaming the victim” and how does it perpetuate violence
- ✧ Basic statistics and scope of the problem
- ✧ Referrals and resources on and off campus

### **Being an Ally/Issues of Oppression**

- ✧ Definitions of oppression, power, privilege, ally, prejudice, and discrimination
- ✧ Basic information on different forms of oppression
- ✧ Difference between being an ally and being a friend



# B i b l i o g r a p h y   a n d R e s o u r c e s

The following are is list of resources I have used for inspiration, exercises, and validation. I would recommend these as a starting point for an educational theatre library.

Boal, A. 1992. *Games for actors and non-actors*. New York: Routledge.

Boal, A. 1985. *Theatre of the oppressed*. New York: Theatre Communications Group.

Boal, A. 1995. *The rainbow of desire*. New York: Routledge.

Kuntz, M. *Creativity across the curriculum: Manual for theatre arts 351*. Western Washington University.

Goldberg, A. 1991. *Improv comedy*. Hollywood: Samuel French.

Rohd, M. 1998. *Theatre for community, conflict & dialogue: The hope is vital training manual*. New Hampshire: Heinemann.

Schutzman, M. & J. Cohen-Cruz. (Ed.). 1994. *Playing Boal: Theatre, therapy, activism*. New York: Routledge.

Spolin, V. & P. Sills. 1999. *Improvisation for the theatre: A handbook of teaching and directing techniques (drama and performance studies), 3rd Edition*. Illinois: Northwestern University Press.

Spolin, V. 1986. *Theater games for the classroom: A teacher's handbook*. Illinois: Northwestern University Press.

## NWU students, others gather to remember Matthew Shepard



students  
acted by a  
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lled "Will  
cal skits

student awareness."

Orr, who is majoring in community health and minoring in theater, began the project three years ago. This

are involved in Lifestyle Advisor programs, which include Alcohol Risk Reduction, Men Against Violence, Sexual Assault Prevention

sexual assault.

"One thing that sets us apart from similar programs is vision, which includes ward the prestige

# The Year



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# P e r f o r m a n c e B u i l d i n g

Developing performances is difficult process to pin down. I usually work off of exercises that I think might work as a good model for a performance. For example, the risk reduction performances created by “Will Act for Change” in 1998-1999 and 1999-2000 are a combination of Monologue Spots (found in *Beginning Improvisation*), Theatre of the Oppressed (found in *Advanced Improvisation*) and Theatre of the Oppressed Quadrilogues (found in *Other Skills*). These performances were grounded in structured improvisation; the outline for scenes and quadrilogues was decided beforehand, but the actual dialogue in performances was improvised.

The creative process of the leader and the group comes out in the development of the performances, later in the year. The risk reduction performances for the first-year students in the Residence Halls have had a set format. Deviation is allowed, as long as the same topics are covered. The format for past risk reduction performances is as follows:

### **Introduction**

Something catchy that grabs the audience right off the bat and introduces the topics in the rest of the performance. The introduction is a good time to play with other mediums such as instruments, vocals, or multimedia. The introduction is usually what the group spends the most time developing.

## The Year

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### Welcome

The group introduces themselves and the facilitator welcomes the audience and thanks them for their time.

### Groundrules

The facilitator explains the groundrules and performance format to the audience:

- ✪ *You may feel uncomfortable. If you do, feel free to leave. Please take someone with you to talk with (point out Resident Advisors or other resources in the room). We will stay after the performance if you have questions, we also have resources to hand out.*
- ✪ *We need your participation in order for the performance to work.*
- ✪ *Our performance uses the true stories of Western students.*
- ✪ *Our performance is improvisational (ask audience for definitions of improvisation).*

### Overview of Performance

The facilitator lists the topics covered in the performance. She then explains the concept of risk reduction:

- ✪ *We expect that everyone takes risks in their lives, what we want to talk about tonight is how to reduce the risk of something bad happening to you when you engage in risky behavior.*



## The Year

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### Scenes

The outline and content for the scenes is as follows:

- ★ Scene
- ★ Freeze
- ★ Facilitate discussion with the audience on what is happening in the scene.
- ★ Quadrilogues
- ★ Facilitate discussion with the audience on issues presented in the scene.
- ★ Facilitate discussion with the audience on what they would do in the scene.
- ★ Ask for a volunteer to come up and replace someone in the scene.
- ★ Redo the scene with the volunteer.
- ★ Facilitate discussion of the volunteer's participation and other possible solutions.
- ★ Transition to the next scene.

**Alcohol and other Drugs:** Focuses on what to do in an alcohol emergency.

**Sexual Health:** Uses a same sex couple. Focuses either on discussing sexual history with your partner, using latex protection with your partner, or being emotionally ready for a sexual relationship.

**Sexual Violence:** Focuses on a third person intervening in a situation where there is the potential for sexual violence.

**Ally Scene:** Usually focuses on racism or homophobia, the definition of an ally, and how to intervene when someone makes an oppressive comment or action.

## **The Year**

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### **Involvement of other Lifestyle Advisors**

In the risk reduction performances with the 1999-2000 group, we had the involvement of the other Lifestyle Advisor groups which address the four risk reduction topics. Two members of each group were assigned to come to each performance. They were responsible for bringing the resources pertaining to their topic and staying after the performance to answer questions. They also had a specific role in the discussion which addressed their particular topic. Alcohol and other Drugs talked about the biphasic model, Sexual Assault Prevention explained consent in the sexual health scene, Western Men Against Violence talked about the violence continuum, and The Ally Building Network gave the definition of an ally.

### **Closing**

There has never been a set ending for these performances. The facilitator discusses the common themes in the scenes with the audience and makes a closing statement about the importance of caring for people (even if you don't know them), speaking up, and getting involved. The facilitator ends by explaining the resources and passing out evaluations.



# R e h e a r s a l s

Rehearsals are a sporadic, as-needed part of performance education. In preparation for the risk reduction performances, it is important to schedule rehearsals after Fall training. Otherwise, rehearsals are used to refresh performances after a break or develop new performances in Winter and Spring quarter.

The format for rehearsals is casual. I usually schedule a classroom, or we find someone's house that is available. If there is time, I like to begin with warm-ups and end with a game. Sometimes people's schedules do not allow for the leisure of either and we just jump right in and end with a break. If you are unsure, ask the group what they need and they will tell you. Often they will tell you without being asked.

The minimum rehearsal time that should be allotted for an hour-long performance is 1.5 hours, two hours is preferred. If the group only needs to refresh their memory and no roles are being changed, you can also get by with a one hour rehearsal.



### W e e k l y      M e e t i n g s

Weekly meetings are a requirement for each topic group in The Lifestyle Advisor Program. Meetings are used as a time to check in with one another, debrief on past performances, plan up-coming performances or other events, and as a rehearsal time if needed. Meetings are also used for business related to The Lifestyle Advisor Program, such as filling out volunteer time sheets and figuring out meeting times for each quarter.

The dynamics of the meeting change from season to season. During Fall quarter, weekly meetings are a necessary to discuss performances. However, if debriefing happens after performances it is possible to skip the weekly meeting if the group is exhausted. However, during Winter quarter the weekly meeting is often the only time the group members will see one another. The performance schedule is often sporadic, and it is difficult to create another performance because schedules tend to be more hectic in the short quarter (unless you can squeeze in a retreat). Thus the meetings Winter quarter are often low energy because of illnesses, absences, and the weather. People may express feeling disconnected from one another. Do not fret, this is natural. Encourage the group to get together outside of the meeting. Spend a few meeting times playing new games. With Spring quarter comes renewed energy. This is a good quarter for retreats and performance building, although time is limited. Hold meetings outside if the weather is good.



## R e t r e a t s

The significance of a retreat is that it recaptures the connection made during Fall training. A retreat is a time for group bonding, introduction of new skills and exercises, and the creation of new performances.

If the retreat is an overnight, we usually do a Friday night through Saturday afternoon. Friday evening is reserved for the group to play, eat, and relax. Handing over the evening to members of the group to plan also works. Saturday is considered a work day which is planned by the leader. If there is not time for an overnight retreat, an afternoon also works. In this case, it is necessary to get down to business right away. The group will usually ask for an overnight retreat.

We have held retreats at The Shalom Center and off-campus. If an overnight retreat is held off-campus, it is important to obtain insurance for all of the members through Prevention and Wellness Services. In terms of food, there may be money available, or it may be necessary to plan a potluck.



## P e r f o r m a n c e s

In Fall quarter, the risk reduction performances take place two times a week in the Residence Halls. Because of the extensive time commitment I usually split the group in two. Some people want to perform both nights and that is fine, but it is imperative they realize the commitment they are taking on for the quarter. If there are returners in the group, ask them to talk about their experience with Fall quarter so the new performance educators can make an educated decision.

For all performances, I ask individuals to arrive at least fifteen minutes beforehand in order to get warmed up and set up the room, and stay at least fifteen minutes afterwards in order to debrief and put the room back in order. The time allotment for performances then is approximately two hours.

For the risk reduction performances, it is helpful to provide advertising materials for the Residence Halls. These may consist of posters, door knockers, or mailbox fliers. The posters should address the date, time, place, and what the performance is about.

In the past, I asked at least one staff member at Prevention and Wellness Services to attend the risk reduction performances in the Residence Halls for a few reasons. One, as support for “Will Act for Change”; two, so the staff could witness how the risk reduction topics were addressed in the Residence Halls; and three, there was a need for resources in the audience. However, that decision is open for discussion.



## A c t i v i s m

Over the years, “Will Act for Change” has engaged in outreach other than performances. The outreach consisted of making and holding signs around campus either informing and challenging students to think about various issues, or identifying themselves as allies. The issues addressed were: Body Pride Week, a hate crime on campus, the death of Matthew Shepard, and the Pride rally for the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Alliance.

Although these were all important statements, they were also forms of political activism. It was necessary to discuss these projects with the organization the group represented, in this case Prevention and Wellness, because of the impact the actions of the group have on the reputation of the organization.

Because the values of performance education tend to bleed into the personal lives of the group members, activism plays a role. However, there is a difference between what one does as an individual and what a group chooses to participate in. Encourage open discussion around both forms. It is important not to repress the desire in the group to take a stand for what they believe in.



### **T h e   R o l e   o f t h e   L e a d e r**

The role of a student leader in “Will Act for Change” is crucial. There is power in peer education, and finding a mentor in someone your own age. My role was different in that I was a student coordinator with a high level of responsibility. Therefore what follows may not be the role of the student coordinator in the future.

My role as a leader was multi-faceted. I led the meetings and the rehearsals; taking care of the schedules, volunteer hour sheets, and the agenda—one student referred to this facet as my “business mode.” I provided support in terms of someone to talk with, do referrals, and provide resources. I also served as a reminder of the bigger picture and the philosophy of “Will Act for Change.” One of my favorite things to say to the group was that they are no different from their audience; they are dealing with the same issues, but they just happen to be on stage in this one moment instead of watching the performance. I told them that is what makes their performance so powerful, and sometimes so painful, and that I do not expect them to have everything figured out, nor for this to be easy.

The most difficult piece of student leadership to describe is the role of creativity. It is necessary for the leader to have an idea for a performance, an introduction, or an exercise that they want carried out and to find a way to lead the group in that direction. The trick is to lead without taking ownership, for the performance is about everyone.





# P e r f o r m a n c e C o n t a c t s

The following are some arenas of past performances. It is possible these organizations will contact “Will Act for Change” for a performance. However, it is also appropriate to contact them and inquire about their interest in a performance.

### **Whatcom Crisis Services**

Phone: 671-5714

### **The Shalom Center**

Contact: Shirley Osterhaus or Chris Berry

Phone: 733-3400

### **The Juvenile Detention Center**

Contact: Linda Berry

Phone: Doris Kent at PWS will set up at 650-7557

### **The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual Alliance at WWU**

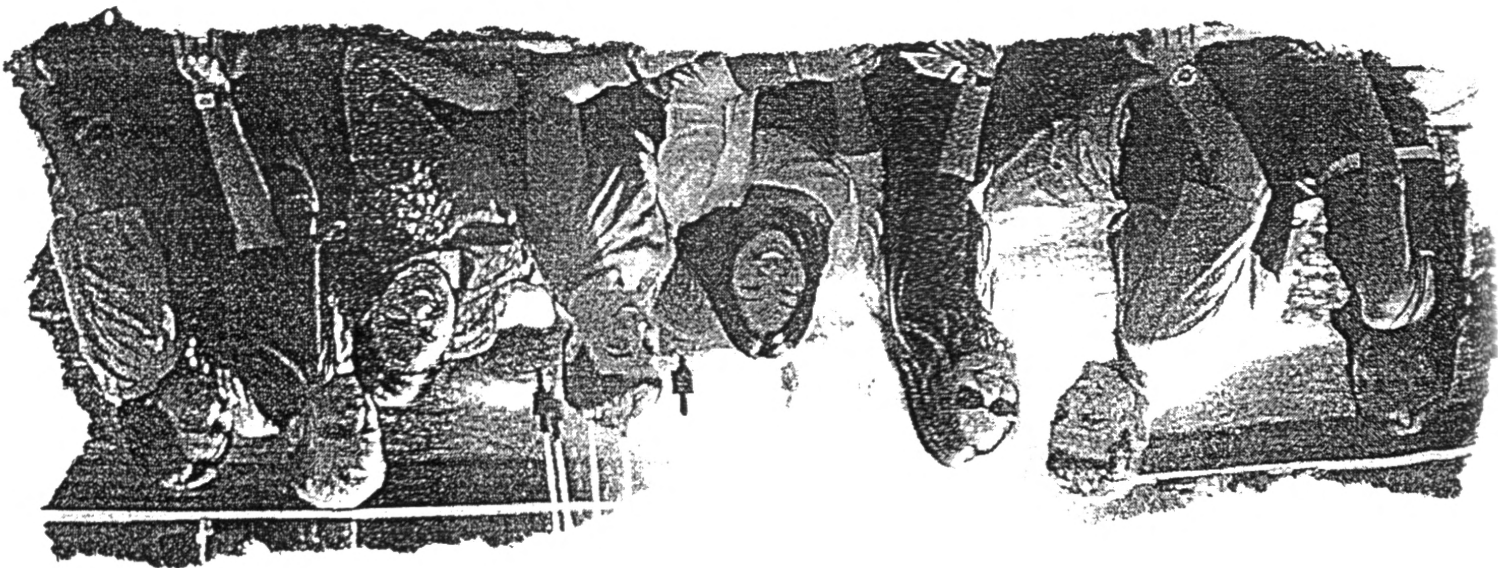
Phone: 650-6120

### **The Whatcom Human Rights Task Force**

Contact: Vernon Johnson or Shirley Osterhaus



# Reflection



## Reflections

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The first year there were only five women in the group. Two had strong, stubborn personalities and difficulty accepting me as a leader, one was easy-going and full of energy, one was wary of the whole concept, and one was quiet and shy with no opinion on anything.

Training took place over one weekend where I gave these women my personal philosophy on performance education and then walked them through every team-building and theatre exercise I knew. They also participated in cross-training the following week, where each person was put in another Lifestyle Advisor group to learn about another topic area such as alcohol and other drugs, or sexual health. The idea of cross-training grew out of my experience with “But I Said No” and the need for performance educators to have knowledge of health and theatre education.

Training was awkward and amazing at the same time. My strategy was to teach them everything I knew and observe what worked. I was uncomfortable as a leader and ended up participating in the group and becoming a leader by default—I was the one with the loudest voice who wanted to take responsibility for planning and training. Yet in no other way was I really a leader. There were moments when an exercise didn’t work and I felt inadequate to be in the position I was. Yet at the end of training, I saw their potential as what they learned gelled into their first performance.

At the end of Fall training every year, each Lifestyle Advisor group presents a piece

## Reflections

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of their education from the training period. “Will Act for Change” spent much of training learning to present monologues of personal stories and speak in front of groups. These skills were emphasized in a popular exercise called Monologue Spots where each person picked a word from cards I developed and told the audience a true story about that word. We decided to replicate that exercise for our presentation. I asked one hundred Lifestyle Advisors and staff for a word, and what I received was “bomb,” a reference to a slang term meaning the best. I think this was a shock to everyone, including me, because we expected a word that referred to health education like alcohol, sex, or AIDS. Yet, as I looked down the line at my five women, they each threw back their shoulders and nodded, ready to take what the audience gave them. My heart rose. “Bomb,” I said, and stepped out from the line to tell my story about the repetition of bomb threats at my high school and the desensitization that occurred with each one. The next woman stepped out and told her story about not making the soccer team and the bomb that exploded in her stomach. Another woman stepped out and told her story about being in Jerusalem during a car bombing. “Bomb,” I repeated after the last woman spoke, and we took a bow. The audience cheered and each woman’s face lit up, almost in realization. It was such a simple exercise, yet performance education was cemented for everyone. The wary one threw her arms around me and whispered, “I get it now.” I was overwhelmed with the experience—it wasn’t perfect, but I taught those five women something. I created a theatre group.

Our next project was the development of a performance. Thinking back on this

## Reflections

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challenge is almost humorous as I had no script-writing experience, yet I did not want to reveal that inability. I perceived the easiest way to create a script was to write monologues and scenes and put the two together. My partner, Yoshiko, who was also the coordinator of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Alliance at the time, suggested a performance that combined homophobia with other issues of oppression to illustrate how oppression is connected. Eager for direction I took this on and had each group member pick a form of oppression that had particular meaning for them. I then sent them off to write a true scene and a monologue based on their own or someone else's experience. Fall quarter was spent putting those scenes and monologues together, writing an introduction, and creating a workshop to follow the performance.

Yoshiko's mother introduced me to Augusto Boal, a theatre activist who created a form of theatre called Theatre of the Oppressed. Basically, this form of theatre recreated an oppressive scene, discussed who was being oppressed and why, and then problem-solved on ways to reduce the oppression in the scene by having audience members act out what they would do. It was perfect and I was inspired. I put this method to the group and we decided to try out a model of this form in our workshop.

The performance was called, "Breaking the Silence: Voicing Our Piece." Each woman performed a true monologue and then the rest of the group acted out a scene where someone was oppressed. In each scene, I played what we called the neutral role; I did not participate in the oppression, nor did I do anything to stop it. At the end of the performance,

## Reflections

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we would conduct a discussion with the audience around the ramifications of neutrality, and then workshop a scene picked by the audience and try to reduce the oppression in that scene. That was the theory anyway, and I hoped it would work.

In the beginning of Winter quarter I invited a group of Resident Advisors, Lifestyle Advisors, and staff of Prevention and Wellness Services to a dress rehearsal in order to get feedback on our performance. My expectations exceeded reality and I was devastated at the end of the evening. I don't think anything went horribly wrong, except the workshop and my facilitation needed work. I felt like I had failed. Yet, I also felt a responsibility to the rest of the group not to reveal my true feelings. They were on cloud nine after their first performance, and I was the director who saw everything that went wrong and nothing that went right.

If I was Humpty Dumpty, the next day it was Pat who put me back together again. She reassured me that the core idea of the performance was beautiful, we just needed to fine tune the details. "Don't let it go," she said. I didn't get over my hurt right away. I was used to achieving on the first try, not falling and getting back on my feet. Yet I learned that lesson and that's exactly what I did. We worked even harder after that.

The rest of the year was filled with meetings, rehearsals, and performances. We performed in the Residence Halls, the Health Education 250 class, and at the Pacific Northwest Collegiate Conference on Wellness. We were even featured in the Bellingham Herald. For Body Pride Week we stood around the fountain in Red Square, holding signs which

## Reflections

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read, “Pick a part of your body to love,” and “If mannequins were real women, they’d be too thin to menstruate.” In the Spring, when a friend was called a dyke and hit in the head with a rock, we again stood around the fountain in Red Square, holding signs that detailed what happened and challenged students to do something about it. Those two incidences brought courage to the group as we stepped out of our comfort zone even more for what we believed in.

At the end of the year I was convinced “Will Act for Change” was a fluke. I was overjoyed by what happened, yet unsure about the next year. I had ten new people in the group, only one was returning, and I kept saying, “It doesn’t get any better than this. What if people are disappointed next year.” Pat once again looked at me and said, “You are enough, just be you.” So that’s exactly what I did.

## Reflections

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Eleven individuals full of energy, creativity, and an overwhelming eagerness to learn formed the second troupe of “Will Act for Change.” From the beginning, the aura of the group differed from the previous year. Absent was the apprehension, and the raw feeling of a pilot year. In its place was confidence, organization, and an almost magical feeling of invincibility.

Over the summer, I lengthened and tightened Fall training to ten days. We worked on improvisation, monologues, facilitation, and team building. This group also participated in cross-training for three days, and returned to share their experiences and create a performance. I volunteered “Will Act for Change” to take on the task of creating a risk reduction performance for the Residence Halls addressing the issues of alcohol and other drugs, sexual health, sexual violence, and being an ally. It was imperative to develop this performance during Fall training in order to perform during the second week of classes. “Act Risky: Taking a Risk to Reduce your Risk,” a semi-improvisational piece encompassing scenes, quadrilogues, and the theory of audience interaction gleaned from Augusto Boal, was the final product. We performed “Act Risky” in the Residence Halls and in various other venues such as The Juvenile Detention Center and the Shalom Center. During Winter quarter, a subsequent performance dealing with different forms of oppression entitled “At the Risk of Being Heard” was performed at the Whatcom Human Rights Task



## Reflections

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Force conference and Whatcom Crisis Services.

From day one, the group formed a tight bond. At the time, I wasn't able to identify the source of this bond, but now I realize it was safety, trust, and honesty. As a result, individuals began to share with one another during Fall training. What they shared was not only positive, but facets of themselves they wanted to change or weren't particularly proud of. Everyone accepted each other unconditionally and supported one another in the desire to take better care of themselves as individuals; as a result, behavior changes occurred. One person stopped smoking marijuana, a few people went to the movies alone, one person started flossing daily. Therapy took place unconsciously because the real task at hand was learning theatre skills and creating a performance. Initially, I did not take responsibility for this safe space, rather I was more in awe of witnessing such transformation and honest interaction. It was not until the following year, when I realized my skill in creating safety within a group in other venues besides performance education, that I was able to associate myself with the connection within this group.

Although everyone cared deeply for each other, they looked to me to instigate care when an individual member was hurt. That pattern changed at a meeting later in the quarter. During a discussion on racism and white privilege, one person became very upset as she recalled a comment she had made during Fall Training. Before I knew it, someone expressed concern for her and asked her to talk about it. Others moved close and held her hand. They were taking care of each other. No longer was I the only one offering support.

## Reflections

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It was the day the siblings discovered one another, and realized they did not have to rely on their mom for everything.

Confronting white privilege was one of the biggest lessons learned within “Will Act for Change” that year. “Act Risky” was performed at the Ethnic Student Center retreat in November, and the scene about becoming an ally sparked an intense discussion between some members of “Will Act for Change” and the audience. It was the first time the ally scene went beyond lip service to an issue the white members of the group needed to confront for themselves. They were asked to become accountable, and informed they had not thought enough about the experience of being a person of color on Western’s campus. Looking back on that moment, one group member stated he was, “knocked off my high horse about being an ally.” Yet they persevered in their growth.

After November, the true examination began in that safe space of eleven people who wanted so much to be a certain kind of person. I realized theatre skills were not the extent of what my students were learning. There were essentially three parts to performance education: the group bonding, the performances, and the learning that occurred within the group that was taken outside into their daily lives. Performance education had association not only with theatre, but with other concepts such as being an ally, speaking up in uncomfortable situations, and accepting one another.

The struggle of learning what it meant to be an ally continued throughout the year. When Matthew Shepard was murdered, “Will Act for Change” made signs and held them

## Reflections

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while standing around the fountain in Red Square; replicating an action taken by the first group of performance educators. For many in the group, this too was a huge moment. Most of them had never made such a public statement before, nor given themselves the identity of activist or ally. The dialogue amongst them included feelings of fear, pride, confusion, confidence, and questioning what it meant to stand up against homophobia and what that said about them. Yet within the supportive network of the troupe, that experience was safe. As one person stated, “I didn’t have the support before to do that, to feel comfortable doing so. Performance education for me, has been a lot about performing, but not just as an actor, as an activist and an educator” (McKinney, 1999, 16).

I cherished my role in the group that year. I facilitated all of the performances, rehearsals, and meetings and was often called by my students when they needed someone to talk with. I wrote my first letters of recommendation and became a mentor. I was extremely invested in my students. They were, in a sense, my children. I thought about them, I worried about them, I did what I could to make them happy. It was exhausting. I remember one afternoon when I was grocery shopping for a retreat we were having. As I walked the store with a list of their favorite foods in my hands, I laughed and shook my head. What a mother I already was at age 21.

My relationship with the two men in the group was especially significant for me. I had not experienced close relationships with men my own age before, and I was honored they saw me as their mentor. The stereotypes I held about men, straight men in particular,

## Reflections

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emotions and relationships, were slowly broken down. These two men, one straight and one gay, forged a tight relationship.

Perhaps one of the most moving moments in my experiences with “Will Act for Change” happened within the relationship those two men shared. The sexual health scene in “Act Risky” was performed one night a week between these two men. In development of that scene, both men sat down with each other voluntarily and talked. They asked each other questions about the sexual intimacy between two men, and divulged what each felt comfortable doing. I have never witnessed a more caring and compassionate conversation around sexual orientation. For me, it was the epitome of how to become and accept an ally and a moment I will never forget.

During the first year of “Will Act for Change,” I was never sure if everyone was proud to be a part of the group. I think it was difficult to participate in the developmental year of a program, especially in an area many people are unfamiliar with. However, in the second year of “Will Act for Change,” the pride in their identity was strong. Their membership went on resumes, became a part of people’s school projects, and a part of their conversations. This, I realized, was part of my personal goals. I wanted to show my students what I loved about educating through theatre, and have them love it just as much as me. It felt good to teach them a skill they utilized in other parts of their life, or a game they played over and over again. The pride exemplified in areas like Angela’s Oral History project of the 1998-1999 performance education troupe, Sarah’s senior project discussing the impact of

## Reflections

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performance education on her Fairhaven concentration, and the return of half of the troupe to “Will Act for Change” the following year.

## Reflections

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The biggest change in the third year of “Will Act for Change” was my leadership; I had gone from participant, to coordinator, to a supervisor. It was time for me to pull back and see what performance education looked like outside of my heart. Up until this year, “Will Act for Change” existed within me, it was time to give it substance. I also had more responsibility this year as a health education intern supervising two other Lifestyle Advisor groups. I knew I couldn’t invest my being into the group as I had done the previous year. All the same, all I knew, did not stop this transition from being painful. I adopted a quote by Lao Tzu as my philosophy for the year, “A leader is best when people barely knows he exists... when his work is done, his aim fulfilled they will say: we did it ourselves.”

I made the decision to ask Megan, a second year group member, to take on “Will Act for Change” the following year as student coordinator. Megan was my true mentee. She was the epitome of a student the previous year, and embodied what she considered performance education, both in and out of the group. She taught other members to see performance education as more than theatre and performances, but also about being part of a team, learning to be an ally, speaking up, and being a role model on campus.

I worked with Megan for a quarter. She was the only student I revealed my fears and flaws to, in hopes of humanizing myself as a leader and easing the transition. I showed her my creative process, and I taught her to facilitate performances. I saw Megan as my legacy. I

## Reflections

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was afraid of my reaction the first time I sat in the audience and watched a performance. I expected a surge of jealousy coveting Megan's role, or a flood of grief in losing my place as a leader in the group. Yet I felt neither, only a huge amount of pride. I felt the satisfaction a parent must feel in watching their child grow up and become an individual; I saw myself, yet I also saw something more, something that bloomed on its own.

Early in the following quarter, Megan dropped her role as student coordinator. She felt overwhelmed and said she needed to concentrate on her major in the coming year. I understood, yet I also felt angry and hurt. By the end of Winter, I had learned to hold onto the education I instilled in Megan—in hopes her skills would benefit her in some other way, even though they would not live on in “Will Act for Change.”

Another challenge was blending the returners from the previous year with the new performance educators. In anticipation of the largest group yet with sixteen people, I decided to pair up the new and the old for Fall training. The pairs worked together in the afternoon on movement, mirroring, and sharing stories. Although this strategy did not shine the way it had in my head, I believe it did work for creating new friendships and acquiring new perspectives. Sometimes a challenge still exists, for the returners have achieved a confidence in performing not found in the new group. Yet they balance each other out, and together make a troupe most audiences can identify with as they learn to identify with one another.

One day we were rehearsing in a classroom and making quite a bit of noise. Someone knocked on the door and asked us to quiet down. Everyone apologized profusely, and then

## Reflections

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one person spoke up and said, “We’re a theatre group.” Such a simple statement, spoken in a moment of laughter, games, and the embarrassment of being caught, yet it stuck in my head. After three years, that proclamation of identity was my eulogy from “Will Act for Change.” No longer was I giving them that identity, they were taking it for themselves.





## E p i l o g u e

This is me. Sometimes “Will Act for Change” is the only mirror I want to look into, or perhaps it is just the most accurate. My college education is wrapped up in my experience of developing and leading this group, for it was as much a part of my education as any class I took. I was inspired to major in Community Health and minor in Theatre Arts, and when people ask me what I will do with such a combination, I show them what I have already done.

When I began acting in high school, a piece of me found fulfillment by being on stage. Yet there was a place in me theatre didn’t touch. I wanted more. “Will Act for Change” filled my insides with creativity, teaching, health and social issues, being a mentor, facilitation, parenting, and theatre. I found what I was looking for on stage, and what I was looking for in life.

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Lifestyle Advisors  
Wellness  
Speakers Bureau

Featuring:  
**Will Act  
for Change**  
Performance Educators



# Materials



**“Breaking the Silence:  
Voicing our Piece”**

Produced by  
PREVENTION & WELLNESS  
SERVICES

Winter 1998

# A p p e n d i x A

## W a g o n   W h e e l   Q u e s t i o n s

*Choose ten questions for the exercise.*

1. What are your honest feelings about being a part of this group?
2. What is the significance of your full name?
3. What is your ethnicity and what does it mean to you?
4. What can you do because of your gender?
5. What can you not do because of your gender?
6. What are you most afraid of and why?
7. Describe your favorite place to be.
8. What is the sexiest part of your body and why?
9. What is one thing that happened to you this summer that you are proud of?
10. Describe one situation where you were oppressed.
11. Describe one moment in your life when you survived.
12. Describe one moment in your life when you took a risk.
13. Describe a childhood memory.
14. Describe the house you grew up in.
15. Who do you consider to be your family right now?
16. Who are some of your role models/heroes/mentors?
17. Describe a family tradition.
18. What are your favorite foods to eat?
19. Do you practice any specific religion or spirituality? Describe what you believe.
20. Describe what it means to be male or female on Western's campus.
21. Talk about your sexual orientation, your own or what you grew up hearing about.
22. What do you consider to be your mental, emotional, and physical abilities or disabilities?
23. What are your top three identities right now?

## **W a g o n    W h e e l    D e b r i e f**

1. How did you feel answering those type of questions?
2. Do you think your answers accurately describe who you are?
3. How do your answers relate to the work you are about to do?
4. How do your gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, etc. affect how you relate to others?
5. Are there certain people you find easier to relate to than others?
6. What is a challenge to you based on your answers to those questions?

**This all relates to standpoint theory:**

“Who you are affects how you hear stories, affects your perspective, affects the assumptions you make about others, affects the type of people you feel comfortable relating to, affects the type of issues you feel comfortable talking about” (Pat Fabiano, 1999).

# A p p e n d i x B

## **C a l l   O u t s**

1. What are you most afraid of?
2. What do you want the most right now?
3. Who is your best friend and why?
4. What is your biggest challenge in learning to trust someone?
5. What do you need to feel safe in this group?
6. What do you want your partner to know about you that would help them understand you better?

# A p p e n d i x C



**1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7 - 8**  
**R e l a t i o n s h i p s**

1. As best friends
2. As beings from another planet
3. As farmers who have been neighbors for 20 years
4. You both just got off work
5. As spies
6. You are actors competing for a role
7. As toddlers
8. You are on a first date
9. As players on a winning team
10. As partners who have been together 50 years
11. As early morning joggers
12. As lovers meeting in the bedroom
13. As mutual admirers
14. As long-lost siblings getting off the plane
15. You are afraid of each other
16. As cab drivers from your cabs
17. As bullies from different schools
18. As marchers in a demonstration
19. You are both late for class
20. You both just woke up
21. You broke up with each other last night
22. As robots
23. As super heroes
24. As business executives
25. You are attracted to each other

# **T h e   C h a i r   i s ... D e s c r i p t i o n s**

Hot

Cold

Too small

Roomy

Soft

Covered with tacks

Covered in cat hair

Very short

A bar stool

Very tall

Bouncy

Slippery

Hard

Occupied

Broken

Not there

One with wheels

One with gum stuck to the seat

A bean bag

Dirty

A dentist's chair

Too close to the one next to it

One with arms

Made of cheese

Itchy

Smelly

Sticky

**Beginning Improvisation Materials**

# **M o n o l o g u e   S p o t   W o r d s**

## **Day One**

Beer  
Middle school  
Pierce  
Food  
Kiss  
Friend  
Teeth  
Body  
Trash  
Bicycle  
Car  
Water  
Pet  
Condom  
Tattoo  
Sleep  
Art  
Street  
Health  
Hands  
911  
Blue  
Test  
Dark  
Shoes  
Cut  
Flirt  
Drink  
Tree  
Morning

## **Day Two**

Risk  
Love  
Blood  
Sex  
Free  
Gay  
Smoke  
Equal  
Parent  
Safe  
Survival  
Pride  
Wasted  
Rape  
Violate  
Drug  
Heal  
Home  
Change  
Voice  
Shoot  
Skin  
Touch  
Hate  
Move  
Identity  
Family  
Space  
Birth  
Race

# A p p e n d i x D

## **R e v e l a t i o n s** **R e l a t i o n s h i p s**

1. A father and son watching television
2. A teacher and student after school
3. Lovers in a shopping mall
4. Siblings eating breakfast
5. Mother and daughter in a car
6. Acquaintances in the library
7. Strangers at a bus stop
8. Father and daughter in the backyard
9. Mother and son in the kitchen
10. Friends in class

# **T a g T e a m I m p r o v S c e n e s a n d R o l e s**

## **Scene 1**

### **Person A**

You are at a party. You have been drinking and are starting to feel the effects of the alcohol. You have been flirting with person B all night. You communicated earlier to person C that you did not want to have sex tonight, but you are becoming very turned on and seriously rethinking that decision

### **Person B**

You have been attracted to person A for a long time. You have met up with them at a party where you are both drinking. You notice person A is fairly intoxicated and paying more attention to you than usual. You decide this is a good time for seduction.

### **Person C**

You are the designated driver for your group of friends at a party, which includes person A. You notice person A is acting quite drunk.

### **Person D**

You are good friends with person B. You are at a party and notice person B has been drinking. You also notice person B is flirting a lot with person A. How does that make you feel? What do you do?

## **Scene 2**

### **Person E**

You find yourself in bed with person F after a night out dancing. You have not been drinking and you are really attracted to person F. You don't know person F very well, but you would like to have sex with them. What kind of conversation do you have?

### **Person F**

You find yourself in bed with person E after a night out dancing. You have not been drinking and you are really attracted to person E. You don't know person E very well. You have had sex with other people, but were inconsistent about protection.

# T a g T e a m I m p r o v S c e n e s a n d R o l e s

## Scene 3

### Person G

You are with a group of friends who are all drinking. You don't have much experience with drinking, plus you have a chemistry test tomorrow that you are worried about. You are best friends with person H. Find a way to have a good time without drinking.

### Person H

You are with a group of friends, including your best friend person G. Everyone is drinking except you and G. You want to drink and be a part of the group.

### Person I

You are with a group of friends you don't know very well. You are drinking, but you feel you know your limits.

## Scene 4

### Person J

You are having coffee with your friends, persons K and L. In the coffee shop you notice two people of the same sex at a different table holding hands and being intimate with one another. You recognize them as a couple you know.

### Person K

You are having coffee with your friends, persons K and L. In the coffee shop you notice two people of the same sex at a different table holding hands and being intimate with one another. You have never seen this before and you are curious.

### Person L

You are having coffee with your friends, persons K and L. In the coffee shop you notice two people of the same sex at a different table holding hands and being intimate with one another. You have been told this is wrong and you are uncomfortable. You make a comment about how you feel.

# A p p e n d i x E



# **C o n v e r s a t i o n   S c e n e s**

## **Scene 1**

A: Hey.

B: Hey.

A: You're late.

B: Sorry.

A: What do you want to do?

B: I don't know.

## **Scene 2**

A: Good morning.

B: Morning.

A: How do you feel?

B: Great! You?

A: Wonderful!

B: Glad to hear it.

## **Scene 3**

A: I missed you.

B: You did?

A: Why shouldn't I?

B: I don't know.

A: You don't know?

B: Forget it.

## pages 18-19

*From: Stone Butch Blues*

*By: Leslie Feinberg*

"I was so ashamed," my mother told my father. He glared at me in the rearview mirror. All I could see were his thick black eyebrows. My mother had been informed that I could no longer attend temple unless I wore a dress, something I fought tooth and nail. At the moment I was wearing a Roy Rogers outfit - without my guns. It was hard enough being the only Jewish family in the projects without being in trouble at the temple. We had to drive a long time to go to the nearest synagogue. My father prayed downstairs. My mother and sister and I had to watch from the balcony, like at the movies.

It seemed like there weren't many Jews in the world. There were some on the radio, but none in my school. Jews weren't allowed on the playground. That's what the older kids told me, and they enforced it.

We were nearing home. My mother shook her head. "Why can't she be more like Rachel?"

Rachel looked at me sheepishly. I shrugged. Rachel's dream was a felt skirt with an applique poodle and rhinestone-studded plastic shoes.

My father pulled our car in front of our house. "You go straight to your room young lady. And stay there." I was bad. I was going to be punished. My head ached with fear. I wished I could find a way to be good. Shame suffocated me.

It was almost sundown. I heard my parents call Rachel to join them in their bedroom to light the Shabbas candles. I knew the shades were drawn. A month before, we'd heard laughter and shouting outside the livingroom windows while my father was lighting the candles. We raced to the windows and peered out into the dusk. Two teenagers pulled down their pants and mooned us. "Kikes!" they shouted. My father didn't chase them away; he closed the drapes. After that, we started praying in their bedroom with the shades pulled down.

Everyone in my family knew about shame.

Soon afterward my Roy Rogers outfit disappeared from the dirty clothes hamper. My father bought me an Annie Oakley outfit instead.

"No!" I shouted, "I don't want to wear it. I'll feel stupid!"

My father yanked me by the arm. "Young lady. I spent \$4.90 for this Annie Oakley outfit and you're going to wear it."

I tried to shake off his hand, but it was clamped painfully on my upper arm. Tears dripped down my cheeks. "I want a Davy Crockett hat."

My father tightened his grip. "I said no."

"But why?" I cried. "Everyone has one except me. Why not?"

His answer was inexplicable. "Because you're a girl."

## pages 78-79

*From: Two or Three Things I Know for Sure*

*By: Dorothy Allison*

When we were girls, my little sister Anne had light shiny hair, fine skin and guileless eyes. She was a girl whose walk at twelve made men stop to watch her pass, a woman at thirteen who made grown men murderous and teenage boys sweaty with hunger. My mother watched her with the fear of a woman who had been a beautiful girl. I watched her with painful jealousy. Why was she so pretty when I was so plain? When strangers in the grocery store smiled at her and complimented Mama on "that lovely child," I glared and turned away. I wanted to be what my little sister was. I wanted all the things that appeared to be possible for her.

It took me years to learn the truth behind that lie. It took my sister two decades to tell me what it was really like being beautiful, about the hatred that trailed over her skin like honey melting on warm bread.

My beautiful sister had been dogged by contempt just like her less beautiful sisters - more, for she dared to be different yet again, to hope when she was supposed to have given up hope, to dream when she was not the one they saved dreams for. Her days were full of boys sneaking over to pinch her breasts and whisper threats into her ears, of girls who warned her away from their brothers, of thin-lipped adults who lost no opportunity to tell her that she really didn't know how to dress.

“You think you pretty, girl? Ha! You an’t nothing but another piece of dirt masquerading as better.”

“You think something? What you thinking, you silly bitch?”

I think she was beautiful. I think she still is.

## Chapter 2

*From: Bone Black*

*By: bell hooks*

We live in the country. We children do not understand that that means we are among the poor. We do not understand that the outhouses behind many of the houses are still there because running water came here long after they had it in the city. We do not understand that our playmates who are eating laundry starch do so not because the white powder tastes so good but because they are sometimes without necessary food. We do not understand that we wash with the heavy, unsmelling, oddly shaped pieces of homemade lye soap because real soap costs money. We never think about where lye soap comes from. We only know we want to make our skin itch less - that we do not want our mouths to be washed out with it. Because we are poor, because we live in the country, we go to the country school - the little white wood-frame building where all the country kids come from. They come from miles and miles away. They come so far because they are black. As they are riding the school buses they pass school after school where children who are white can attend without being bused, without getting up in the wee hours of the morning, sometimes leaving home in the dark.

We are not bused. The school is only a mile or two away from our house. We get to walk. We get to wander aimlessly in the road - until a car comes by. We get to wave at the buses. They are not allowed to stop and give us a ride. We do not understand why. Daddy says the walk to school will be good for us. He tells us

again and again in a harsh voice of the miles he walked to school through fields in the snow, without boots or gloves to keep him warm. We are not comforted by the image of a small boy trudging along many miles to school so he can learn to read and be somebody. When we close our eyes he becomes real to us. He looks very sad. Sometimes he cries. We are not at all comforted. And there are still days when we complain about the walk, especially when it is wet and stormy.

## Johnny

*From: A Tree Grows in Brooklyn*

*By: Betty Smith*

Take me. I'm nobody. My folks came over from Ireland the year the potatoes gave out. Fellow ran a steamship company said hed'd take my father to America - had a job waiting for him. Said he'd take the boat fare from his wages. So my father and mother came over.

My father was like me - never held a job long.

My folks never knew how to read or write. I only got to the sixth grade myself - had to leave school when the old man died.

I was a boy of twelve then. I sang in saloons for the drunks and they threw pennies at me. Then I started working around saloons and restaurants...waiting on people...

I always wanted to be a real singer, the kind that comes out on stage all dressed up. But I didn't have no education and I didn't know the first way about how to start in on being a stage singer. Mind your job, my mother told me. You don't know how lucky you are to have work, she said. So I drifted into the singing waiter business. It's not steady work. I'd be better off if I was just a plain waiter. That's why I drink.

I drink because I don't stand a chance and I know it. I couldn't drive a truck like other men and I couldn't get on the cops with my build. I got to sling beer and sing when I just want to sing. I drink because I got responsibilities that I can't



handle. I am not a happy man. I got a wife and children and I don't happen to be a hard-working man. I never wanted a family.

## Those Who Don't

*From: The House on Mango Street*

*By: Sandra Cisneros*

Those who don't know any better come into our neighborhood scared. They think we're dangerous. They think we will attack them with shiny knives. They are stupid people who are lost and got here by mistake.

But we aren't afraid. We know the guy with the crooked eye is Davey the Baby's brother, and the tall one next to him in the straw brim, that's Rosa's Eddie V., and the big one that looks like a dumb grown man. he's Fat Boy, though he's not fat anymore nor a boy.

All brown all around, we are safe. But watch us drive into a neighborhood of another color and our knees go shakity-shake and our car windows get rolled up tight and our eyes look straight. Yeah. That is how it goes and goes.

.

## Chapter 26

*From: Stone Butch Blues*

*By: Leslie Feinberg*

The moment I climbed the subway stairs at Christopher Street I heard an amplified voice say the words lesbian and gay. When I emerged to street level, I found myself in the midst of a crowd of hundreds of people listening to speakers at a rally.

I'd seen gay demonstrations in the streets before. I had always paused to watch from across the street, proud this young movement was not beaten back into the closets. But I always walked away feeling outside of that movement and alone. This time one voice stopped me in my tracks. It was a young man who took the mike and in a strong voice, trembling with emotion, described being restrained and forced to watch his lover being beaten to death with baseball bats by a gang. "I watched him die there on the sidewalk," he cried, "and I couldn't save him. We have to do something. This can't keep going on."

He handed the microphone to a woman whose hair was wrapped in bright African fabric. She urged others to come up and speak.

A young woman from the crowd climbed up on the stage. "There were these guys in my neighborhood in Queens." Her voice could hardly be heard, even with the microphone. "They used to yell things at me and my lover. One night, I heard them behind me. I was alone. They pulled me into the parking lot behind the hardware store and raped me. I couldn't stop them."

Tears streamed down my face. The man next to me put his hand on my shoulder. His eyes were filled with tears too.

“I never told my lover what happened,” she whispered into the microphone. “ I felt like we’d both been raped if I told her.”

As she climbed down from the stage I thought: This is what courage is. It’s not just living through the nightmare, it’s doing something with it afterward. It’s being brave enough to talk about it to other people. It’s trying to organize to change things.

# A p p e n d i x F

## Play, workshop entertains and educates audience

**By Matt Williams**  
The Western Front

A group of six Western Lifestyle Advisers earned a standing ovation from over a 150 audience members for their performance and workshop efforts at the Wellness Conference Friday.

The group, "Will Act For Change," performed a six-scene play dealing with oppression, followed by an interactive workshop with the audience.

Each scene of the play was preceded with a monologue and touched on a different subject of oppression: race, sexual orientation, body image, class, disability and gender.

"(The performance) went great. I think the audience was really receptive," Coordinator Daisey Orr said.

The six members of the group, Daisey Orr, Monica Bastian, Betheny Bafus, Michal Blum, Shannon Simer and Katie Accola, each wrote a monologue about an experience of their own that

relates to the scene it precedes, Accola said.

Each of the scenes were true stories of the cast members or other Western students, Accola said.

The workshop gave the audience a chance to vent their emotions about what they had seen and even show what they would do when put in the situation of the neutral character in each of the scenes.

The presentation drew high praise, not for the performance itself but for the following open forum workshop, from Director of Education at Bacchus and Gamma Peer Education Network David Hellstrom.

"I loved that you were teachers first, and actors second," Hellstrom, who travels around the nation to conferences such as this one, said in conversation with Orr. He added that this presentation was in the top 10-percent he has seen.

"(The presentation) was not about great drama," he said, "It

gave us a starting point for discussion."

The crowd began to file in at 10 minutes before 7 p.m. and the evening's activities began shortly after with an eloquent and well-scripted speech on being one's self by Associated Students President Shane O'Day.

"If I smell like fish, then let me smell like fish, because I have the right to do so," was one of the many quotable lines in O'Day's polished speech.

"Will Act For Change" took the stage after O'Day.

"It went really well," Accola said, "We all had a ton of energy and projected ourselves well."

"A lot of people tonight were emotionally connected," Hellstrom said.

"It's not a blanket (politically correct) kind of play," Orr said, adding she wanted people to think about the meaning of what they say and do, not just cover it up with politically correct language.

"Will Act For Change" was

started by Orr at the beginning of fall quarter.

"Fall was mostly a development quarter," Orr said.

The group had a feedback session at the end of fall quarter and changed some of the scripts, Accola said.

The group performed three times in dorms last quarter and will be performing in dorms again and in the Health Education 250 class this quarter, Orr said.

"If we can just educate the few, they will educate the many," Accola said.



Front/Aaron Dahl  
"Will Act For Change" fields questions after their performance.



Western Washington University  
Whatcom Community College  
Northwest Indian College  
Bellingham Technical College

# Student actors hope oppressors change their act

**SOCIAL ISSUES: WWU**  
women's play deals with  
how hurting can stop.

BY MARY LANE  
THE BELLINGHAM HERALD

A group of Western Washington University students have put together a short play to help others spot racism, sexism and other forms of oppression in their lives — and how to take steps to stop them.

The six women, who volunteer as lifestyle advisers for Western's Prevention and Wellness Services office, call themselves Will Act for Change.

They'll perform tonight in Viking Union for about 300 health professionals and student educators attending the Pacific Northwest Conference on Collegiate Wellness.

The group uses short skits and monologues to spotlight subtle forms of oppression, showing students how they can unknowingly hurt others with actions and comments. At the end, they ask audience members to come up with ways a neutral bystander could take action.

"Through acting, we can relate to a lot more people," said Bethany Batufus, 19. "It's a very visual performance and so we're able to portray a lot of things in a short amount of time."

Will Act for Change has performed the short play at a handful of campus residence halls since September. Each of the six women focus on a specific form of oppression: racism, homophobia, sexism and classism, as well as discrimina-

## ▼ Performance

Will Act for Change will perform "Breaking the Silence: Voicing our Piece" at 7 tonight in the Viking Union Lounge at Western Washington University. The performance is part of the Pacific Northwest Conference on Collegiate Wellness and is free and open to the public.

selves why they don't take action when they know someone is being oppressed.

"I hope that people come away with a sense of understanding that being neutral is a choice," said Simer, who wants to modify the play for use in elementary schools. "Sometimes that's OK. But sometimes they really need to think about that choice and why they chose that way."

Judging from audience comments, students who see the play not only identify with the victims, but also with the people doing the oppressing. Accola said.

"We've had people say, 'Wow, I do that,'" she said.

Not all students get so involved. Orr watches some students during the performances who look like they're tuning out, becoming fascinated with a piece of lint on their clothes. She doesn't assume they aren't getting anything out of the play.

"That's what I would do if I was uncomfortable," Orr said. "I think the quietest people are affected the most."



DORIS KENT COURTESY PHOTO

**ACTING OUT THEIR MESSAGE:** Will Act for Change, a troupe of six women who attend Western Washington University, performs a play that helps raise awareness about different forms of oppression. Clockwise from lower right are Bethany Batufus, Monica Bastian, Daisy Orr, Katie Accola, Michal Blum and Shannon Simer. All six volunteer as lifestyle advisers at WWU's Prevention and Wellness Services Office.

tion based on body size and abilities.

Each monologue is based on the player's own experience. For example, Katie Accola, 20, illustrates sexism by talking about growing up with a twin brother who had more freedom than she did.

Michal Blum, 21, shares her experience of growing up in a

family of relatively modest means in the wealthy community of Mercer Island. Batufus talks about enduring comments from others about being tall.

The monologues are followed by short skits illustrating those issues. The skit about sexism, for example, shows a professor treating men's questions more seriously than those from women.

Each skit includes a bystander who remains neutral throughout the scene. Students are invited to act out what they would do if they were in a similar situation.

"I was not expecting people to be so willing to participate," she said. "I was really worried we were going to have to have plants in the audience to actually volunteer."

The goal is to give students ideas on ways to take action and a chance to try them out, said Shannon Simer, 22. She also wants people to ask them-





# NEIGHBORHOODS

Western Washington University  
Whatcom Community College  
Northwest Indian College  
Bellingham Technical College

## Actors encourage fellow students to step out of their comfort zone

**SOCIAL ISSUES:** Program teaches how to take positive risks.

BY PENNY F. STONE  
FOR THE BELLINGHAM HERALD

A drum beats and the performance begins as students gather in the Fairhaven College dorm lounge Tuesday evening to watch.

A student on stage lies flat on a sofa at a party.

"I passed out," the narrator explains.

Two female students kiss and talk about spending the night together.

"I wanna have sex," one says. "I'm not ready," the other replies.

A male student grabs a female dance partner at a nightclub.

"Something's not right," the narrator says aloud.

A frustrated student vents about ethnic and minority groups on campus, saying she's "tired of everyone whining and complaining."

Real life or performance art? Actually, it's both.

The scenarios portray real situations facing college students today, situations re-enacted by a group of volunteer students involved in a project called "Will Act for Change."

They perform topical skits twice a week in campus dorms, as part of the Lifestyle Advisor program through Western Washington University's Prevention & Wellness Services. The performers confront uncomfortable issues head-on, and invite viewers to brainstorm ways to deal with the situations.

The brainchild of senior Daisey Orr, "Will Act for Change" addresses such issues as alcohol and drug abuse, oppression, sex and sexual violence.

"I wanted to create something engaging and interactive," Orr said. "Something that would raise



JASON KOSIC PHOTO

**REAL SITUATIONS:** Western Washington University students perform the opening act from the play, "Will Act for Change," at Fairhaven College.

student awareness."

Orr, who is majoring in community health and minor in theater, began the project three years ago. This year's theme is "One Moment," created with the help of junior Melissa Kennedy, student coordinator and the show's narrator.

"We wanted to make theater accessible, to show anybody can do it," said Kennedy, who helps train the volunteers, most of whom have minimal theater experience.

Those to 150 students volunteers

are involved in Lifestyle Advisor programs, which include Alcohol Risk Reduction, Men Against Violence, Sexual Assault Prevention and Ally Network Building — all aimed at encouraging students to make wise choices in life.

"Everyone engages in risk-taking," Orr said. "We want to show how to avoid negative consequences."

"We also want to encourage people to take positive risks," said Kennedy. "Risk is not necessarily a bad thing."

Pat Fabiano is staff adviser for the Lifestyle Advisor program and director of Prevention & Wellness Services, which counsels students in such areas as health, alcohol and drugs, and

sexual assault.

"One thing that sets us apart from similar programs is our mission, which includes to work toward the presence of welcoming dignity and justice within the community," she said. "These are issues that the students are dealing with, such as racism and homophobia, are social viruses that affect the health of the community as a whole."

Ideas for the performance skits spring from true stories of Western students. After they set up a scene, such as the male student manhandling a woman at a dance, the players freeze and solicit responses from the audience. "How does that make you feel?" "How would you define consent

or 'oppression'?" and "What are some possible ways to resolve this?"

Then they give audience members the opportunity to take the place of one of the characters in the scene.

"We encourage you to step out of your comfort zone," Kennedy told the approximately 60 students in the audience Tuesday.

Sophomore David Betz-Zall came forward and played the friend of the aggressive male dance partner, trying to set him straight by telling him that what he was doing wasn't right.

"The audience takes a risk to come up and play with us," Kennedy said, "but it's worth it; people have fun and learn a lot."

Betz-Zall had seen the group perform last year and was impressed.

"I enjoy being able to participate," he said. "And the idea of taking a positive risk is new to me; I hadn't thought of that as a risk at all."

During the performance, audience members are introduced to other Lifestyle Advisor programs, as representatives stand up to explain their programs. At the end, free items such as pamphlets, condoms and safety whistles are handed out.

Orr and Kennedy said this year's theme, "One Moment," was chosen because people face moments when they're confronted by decisions that have positive or negative consequences.

Such as the decision to leave your buddy passed out on the sofa, or to get help in case he's really in trouble.

Or to ignore a bully, rather than intervene.

Or to say nothing when a friend rants about minorities, rather than to call her on it.

"One moment can be defined as a small and definite period of time," a narrator says at the start of the show. "Every moment matters."



# A p p e n d i x   G

Join  
*Will Act For Change*  
*Prevention and Wellness Services'*  
*Performance Education Troupe*  
for an evening of  
**Improvvisational Theatre**

**ACT RISKY:**  
**TAKING A RISK TO REDUCE YOUR RISK**

Date: Tuesday, October 13, 1998  
Time: 7:00 pm  
Place: Fairhaven Main Lounge

**We Act...You Re-act!**

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# A p p e n d i x   H

## Participant Evaluation

Gender: F M Age: \_\_\_\_ Year in School: 1 2 3 4 5 5+ Grad Not a Student  
 Off-campus: \_\_\_\_ Residence Hall: \_\_\_\_ Which Hall? \_\_\_\_

### How did you hear about this performance?

Resident Advisor Resident Director Friend Poster Other: \_\_\_\_

### Performance

Effective and interactive facilitation	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Respect for diverse beliefs/individuals	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Written materials/resources/referrals	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Consistent and clear message	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor

### Which scene had the most impact on you?

Alcohol Emergency Sexual Health (same sex couple) Sexual Violence Being an Ally

Why? \_\_\_\_\_

### How do you think you will use the information from this performance? (Circle all that apply)

Think about my own behaviors	Tell someone about what I learned	I'm not sure
Change my own behaviors	Encourage others to change their behaviors	I don't expect to use it

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# Evaluation

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Residence Hall \_\_\_\_\_

Did you attend the performance?      Yes      No

## Advertising packets

Timeliness in receiving advertising packet	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Effectiveness in reaching residents	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor

Comments:

## Performance

Effective and interactive facilitation	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Respect for diverse beliefs/individuals	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Written materials/resources/referrals	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Consistent and clear health message	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor

Comments:

Which scene had the most impact on your residents?

Alcohol Emergency      Sexual Health (same sex couple)      Sexual Violence      Racism

Comments:

Was this performance an effective way of educating students on the issue of risk reduction in the above areas?

Yes      No

Comments:

Would you be interested in seeing a similar program addressing these issues next year?

Yes      No

Any Additional Comments:

Thank you for your time, energy and support!